



BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

The End
of a Legacy

NEVEN ANDJELIC

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Neven Andjelic



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To Oskar and Davorka

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List of Abbreviations

AFP	French Press Agency [Agence France Presse]
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BiH	Bosnia-Herzegovina [Bosna i Hercegovina]
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CK	Central Committee [Centralni Komitet]
DSS	Democratic Socialist Alliance [Demokratski socijalisticki savez]
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GVSS	City Council of Unions [Gradsko Vijece Saveza Sindikata]
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union [Hrvatska demokratska zajednica]
HSS	Croatian Peasant Party [Hrvatska seljacka stranka]
JMO	Yugoslav Moslem Organization [Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija]
JNA	Yugoslav People's Army [Jugoslavenska narodna armija]
MBO	Moslem Bosniak Organization [Muslimanska bosnjacka organizacija]
PBS	Privredna Banka Sarajevo
RTV	Radio-Television [radio-televizija]
SANU	Serbian Academy of Science and Arts [Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti]
SDA	Party of Democratic Action [Stranka demokratske akcije]
SDK	Department of Public Auditing [Sluzba drustvenog knjigovodstva]
SDS	Serbian Democratic Party [Srpska demokratska stranka]
SFRJ	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SIV	Savezno Izvršno Vijece [Federal Executive Council]
SK	League of Communists [Savez komunista]

SK-SDP	League of Communists-Socialist Democratic Party [Savez komunista-Socijalistička demokratska partija]
SKJ	League of Communists of Yugoslavia [Savez komunista Jugoslavije]
SKPJ	League of Communists Movement for Yugoslavia [Savez komunista pokret za Jugoslaviju]
SPO	Serbian Movement of Renewal [Srpski pokret obnove]
SRSJ	Alliance of Reformist Forces of Yugoslavia [Savez reformskih snaga Jugoslavije]
SSO	Alliance of Socialist Youth [Savez socijalističke omladine]
SSO-DS	Alliance of Socialist Youth-Democratic Alliance [Savez socijalističke omladine-demokratski savez]
SSRN	Socialist Alliance of Working People [Socijalistički savez radnog naroda]
SUBNOR	Alliance of Associations of Fighters of the People's Liberation War [Savez udruženja boraca narodno-oslobodilackog rata]
TV	Television [Televizija]
UKSSO	University Conference of the Alliance of Socialist Youth [Univerzitetska konferencija Saveza socijalističke omladine]
UJDI	Association for Democratic Yugoslav Initiative [Udruženje za jugoslavensku demokratsku inicijativa]
USSR	Soviet Union
ZAVNOBiH	State's Antifascist Council of People's Liberation of Bosnia-Herzegovina [Zemaljsko antifasističko vijeće narodnog oslobodjenja Bosne i Hercegovine]

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Foreword

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina attracted the world's attention and created a demand for Yugoslav experts to fill the void left behind by decades of international unconcern about what had been, during the Cold War, best known as a cheap holiday destination. As people clamoured for explanation, keen to understand the reasons for the carnage they saw daily on TV, but unwilling to get too drawn into elaborate local complexities, two kinds of easily-digestible interpretation became popular. One attributed the violence to ancient ethnic hatreds and Bosnia's unfortunate position on a geo-political fault-line between incompatible civilisations. The other explained it in terms of the will-to-power of a dictatorial elite of neighbouring nationalist politicians—Milosevic and Tudjman above all—who had hijacked and thwarted the promised democratization of politics after 1989.

For one, the roots of war lay deep in the past, and expressed hatreds shared by the mass of the population; for the other, causes lay much closer to the present, and represented the crushing of mass politics by authoritarian leaderships. But, despite these differences, the two points of view had one thing in common: they were not much concerned with Bosnia-Herzegovina itself, its inhabitants and their lives. These became the puppets of much larger forces, and any possible contribution events there before the war might have made to starting the war itself were ignored. In particular, the decades of communist rule were passed over in silence, or regarded—much as Croce once famously described fascism in Italy—as a mere parenthesis in history.

The novelty and importance of this book lies in the fact that it takes Bosnian politics, society and culture seriously and in doing so makes it easier to see just why the war broke out, and how extraordinary it was that it did so. Reading this analysis, it becomes harder to swallow the ancient ethnic hatreds argument once we appreciate the novelty of the new nationalist parties after 1989, and see how they initially worked together in the 1990 elections to defeat the communists and reform communists who they all regarded as their chief threat. And it also becomes harder to accept the idea that what lay behind the war was some kind of failed democratization when, as Andjelic succinctly puts it, 'it was democracy that allowed nationalism to govern Bosnia'.

Nor could there be anyone better qualified to tell this story than Neven Andjelic. Behind and before the scholarly research and appraisal of sources lie his own experiences of the period he analyses. At this time he was active in the youth movement in Sarajevo and, subsequently, a popular member of the first generation of critical and satirical voices in the media. As a provocative journalist, who pioneered the idea of confronting politicians with the absurdity of their own rhetoric, he made himself many enemies among the elite but more supporters among his viewers and listeners. The story he tells here combines to an unusual degree the insights of personal involvement with the analytic detachment of the scholar he subsequently became.

Drawing on a wide range of sources, including many that will be unfamiliar to students of the subject, Andjelic locates the beginning of the end in the Agrokomerc scandal of 1987, which affected the viability of one of Bosnia's largest companies. Till that point, the republic had been the most faithfully Titoite of all, perhaps precisely because of its delicate ethnic balance. But this balance was managed successfully by an authoritarian party apparatus that monitored the ethnic balance of its leadership and prevented the emergence of inter-communal tensions or indeed even discussions. Its success was mirrored in sharply rising party membership figures and in rapid urbanization and industrialization, based around the creation of giant firms. Of these Agrokomerc was outstanding. But it was also typical in its close connection to the political elite: its troubles marked the onset of a series of scandals, which destroyed the legitimacy of the old party and led members to leave in droves.

The collapse of the old order was hastened by the emergence of new social forces. Some of these were welcome to those Western liberals who looked forward after the end of the Cold War to a brave new world of universal democracy. They included the students' movement, closely linked to those elsewhere in eastern Europe, and a newly autonomous spirit in the media, which started—and Andjelic was in there too—in its youth section, before spreading more widely and breaking the party's traditional lock on propaganda. But some would not have been so welcome. Religious leaders, at least some of them, started to sound a more nationalistic note, and there were the first signs of small-scale violence with an ethnic dimension. Nevertheless, it took time for ethnic politics to emerge, and it was not until 1990, a crucial election year, that the nationalist parties, which have dominated Bosnia-Herzegovina since that point, first took shape. In his effective concluding chapters, the author analyses the emergence of nationalist rule and shows that as late as 1991 the new parties and their leaders were still feeling their way. By the time the war had spread from Slovenia to Croatia, however, the old communist system which had ruled Bosnia-Herzegovina for decades was itself history, and the tensions between the three main Bosnian parties had already become unmistakeable.

Mark Mazower

Preface

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina marked the last decade of the twentieth century in Europe. Although it was not the first war to be covered thoroughly by the modern media, it was the first that the western media did not have a side in, unlike the Gulf War. Therefore, there are numerous reliable sources in the media and academia for research into the war and its causes. Many books, although many of them are not really academic, have dealt with this period of contemporary history. However, a proper use of Bosnian sources, to get a broader and clearer picture of the developments in society that led to the war, is still lacking. Besides an understanding gained from personal experience, this work is to a large extent based on sources in Bosnia-Herzegovina, such as newspapers and periodicals, the official transcripts of local institutions, taped recordings of local electronic media and research interviews conducted with insiders who have a reliable knowledge of the events.

There are, however, limitations imposed on this work by its length and availability of documents since the official archives in Bosnia-Herzegovina are not opened yet. Hence the use of many private collections of documents and other material and audio-visual tapes. It may be easier to obtain the material from official institutions in near future. The bibliography presented in this work is selective and covers the sources used in research or those that had some influence on the final result. It does not mean, however, that one should agree with all the sources and other authors' arguments. Secondary sources that have not been included in the bibliography simply did not have any substantial influence on the work or were not used for the hypothesis of the work.

I have also used a substantial portion of secondary sources in the English language to help check the reliability of my findings and, more importantly, the theoretical aspects of this work. In this sense, the works of Mazower, Gellner, A.J.P. Taylor and Milovan Djilas were invaluable and they helped to strengthen my arguments. There is also an important compilation of various authors edited by Seroka and Pavlovic, and another by Dyker and Vejvoda, which led me to my conclusions about the problems of the transformation of Bosnian society. The works of some other authors, such as Gow, Lederer, Stavrianos, Ignatieff, Thompson and Judah, also proved to be very important secondary sources for my

work. One should also bear in mind the importance of Malcolm and Huntington, despite their somewhat controversial arguments.

This all helped me to produce a picture of Bosnia-Herzegovina that in many respects sheds new light on the events of those years. In achieving this, I am grateful to all the people listed as primary sources for my research, in particular to Mladen Bilic, Senada Cumurovic, Tihomir Loza, Senad Pecanin and Mladen Sancanin. I am also indebted to Dragica Uljarevic, Sladjan Ajvaz and Nebojsa Roncevic at the Law Faculty at Sarajevo University, who provided me with the faculty's archive. Helen Wallace and the faculty of the Sussex European Institute provided me with their intellectual guidance during the course of this work as most of this book was presented in my doctoral thesis. Huge credit should be paid to Mark Mazower, who showed great patience in long and numerous discussions on many subjects. His thoughts proved to be very important for my own ideas. The wit and intelligence of Mary Kaldor was also important.

I want to thank to many people who helped me in my work with their advice, views and experience: the late Professor Francis Carsten, Cornelia Sorabji, Janet Carsten, Michael Stewart, Jonathan Spencer, Oliver and Svetlana Carsten, Aimee Shalan, Bill Mazower and everyone else who gave a piece of advice. My parents, Milica and Milenko, proved not only to be a great support, but helped me to a great extent in collecting research material when I was not able to be in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The person who showed the most patience during my work was my wife Davorka, to whom I am most grateful. My gratefulness goes also to Oskar, who proved to be a lively but understanding baby during the final touches of my work on the book. I am obliged to the Sussex European Institute, the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust and the Open Society Foundation, for their encouragement and financial support. Finally, I want to thank Frank Cass Publishers for their belief that all those years were worth spending on research and writing.

My final note regards the name of the country. The majority of contemporary authors tend to call it Bosnia. In the past, historians used the full name, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, A.J.P. Taylor talked of 'two provinces' and Vladimir Corovic always referred to Bosnia-Herzegovina in the plural form. Personally, I prefer this old, unfortunately lost, tradition. It had been consistently written this way throughout the original manuscript, but after passing through some stages of editing this consistency has been lost. In this way, the book reflects life.

Introduction

It has been popular amongst journalists and politicians in the West, to explain the Bosnian conflict in terms of 'tribalism' or 'ancient ethnic hatred'. My personal experience has led me to the conclusion that this belief is even more widespread among ordinary people. Scholars, however, have hardly begun to tackle this recent war in the Balkans seriously. The majority of them can be divided into two groups: one paying attention to history, however distant, and examples of ethnic grievances, and the other explaining everything in terms of aggression from neighbouring countries whilst ignoring internal Bosnian developments. Ironically, many advocates of this thought also paid more attention to the history, albeit of tolerance, than to more recent Bosnian events in the late twentieth century. This view will be analysed later in more detail.

Some authors who have involved themselves in the discussion on the causes of the war have paid plenty of attention to history and this approach to the problem is certainly connected to a broader antipathy to the Balkans. Plenty of examples of this line of thought can be found at random throughout modern history. A typical one describes the richness of the country and its natural resources only to conclude: There is an abundance of plants which could be used for medicinal, domestic and technological purposes (such as dyestuffs), if the region were not inhabited and governed by such wild and barbarous people.¹ Many authors in the past, some of whom even fell in love with the Balkans, like Rebecca West, described its character as savage. Indeed, similar descriptions have also appeared in some of the most known and arguably the best works of literature by Bosnian authors, such as Ivo Andric and Mesa Selimovic. This kind of artistic writing certainly gives the reader some specific flavour of a strange, unknown place, but does the region no historical justice. Academic and pseudo-academic works looking into a 'history of hatred' could be well presented through the arguments of Lenard Cohen who counted three major factors:

...first, the persistence and intensification of deep-seated animosities among the country's diverse ethnic and religious groups; who lived together rather uneasily in the Balkan region for centuries...second, the desire of many Yugoslav citizens to redress grievances arising from the

violent bloodletting among ethnic groups during World War II; and, finally, the failure of the communist regime's nationality policy...²

This kind of argument is more common for journalists and politicians or military officers involved in peacekeeping missions during 1990s. Thus Patrick Bishop writes of 'an inability to forget hatreds of the past [that] has condemned successive generations to perpetuate them'.³ General Michael Rose, in *Fighting for Peace*, blames throughout the work 'hatred and history of violence'.⁴ Finally, most of the politicians and envoys involved in peace negotiations during the 1990s accepted a necessity to divide the country on the basis of historical animosity of the ethnic groups because there was hardly any other argument to favour this option. Such descriptions often rely on stereotypes that prevent proper analysis and conclusions, if any. There is no proper understanding of history and plenty of prejudice based on early Balkan travellers through 'European Turkey' as the Balkans used to be known in western Europe only two centuries ago. As Maria Todorova has rightly found:

It would do much better if the Yugoslav, not Balkan, crisis ceased to be explained in terms of Balkan ghosts, ancient Balkan enmities, primordial Balkan cultural patterns and proverbial Balkan turmoil, and instead was approached with the same rational criteria that the West reserves for itself: issues of self-determination versus inviolable status quo, citizenship and minority rights, problems of ethnic and religious autonomy, the prospects and limits of secession, the balance between big and small nations and states, the role of international institutions.⁵

Authors, both past and present, have found proof of 'tribalism' or 'ancient ethnic hatred' in past Balkan wars and in the epic traditions of its peoples. Thus Cohen talks of 'the particular circumstances and traditions endemic to the Balkans'.⁶ However, every European region has its own characteristics and the Balkans should be viewed with the understanding that although its problems are specific, it is not the 'wild east' of Europe. Perpetual wars occurred throughout the continent until the mid-twentieth century and were not exclusively Balkan. The major difference was economic: as the rest of Europe was more developed it was often understood to be more civilized. Another proof of tribalism is often found in strong family ties, although one can easily find very similar examples of family organization in other southern countries, such as Italy or Spain, which are saved from the kind of descriptions used for the Balkans.

One of the most prominent advocates of the idea that the Balkans were historically determined for perpetual war is Samuel Huntington, with his theory of a 'clash of civilizations'.⁷ He describes the Bosnian War as a 'fault line war', giving a major role to religion in his portrayal of this clash.⁸ After the end of the Cold War and the secession of the continent's ideological split, some post-modern authors, of whom Huntington was at the forefront, sought a new basis

for divisions. This basis was found in a split between 'western Christianity', that is, Catholic and Protestant societies, and Islam and Orthodox Christianity. Thus, the line across Europe was drawn once again, but it was not clear how it divided Bosnia because of the mixture of religions in this country. Following such stereotypes, one might conclude that the region was predetermined for wars because of its history and because of a 'clash of civilizations', as the new theory argued. This theory, however, is not new or exclusive to post-Cold War authors. Several decades earlier, A.J.P. Taylor argued that 'nationalism could bridge the gap between Protestant and Roman Catholic; it could not bridge the wider gap between Roman Catholic and Orthodox.'⁹

This theory is flawed, however, because in drawing a new line of division, authors following Huntington's ideas ignore more recent developments. They follow the most eastern line, which could have been drawn in medieval times, to divide regions where Catholic and Protestant populations are in the majority from predominantly Orthodox areas. This discussion also attempts to distinguish central Europe from regions that could not belong to it because of their different heritage and culture. The borders of the former Austria-Hungary are often seen to mark a new 'invisible' divide. But common twentieth-century history on both sides of the border together with the subsequent development of cultural similarities, especially with regard to politics, suggest an opposite argument. Such a division does not exist. Bosnia is the clearest example. It was a part of the Habsburg Empire and, therefore, should be considered a central European region, and it also, for most of the nineteenth century, lay just outside of this empire. Connections and similarities with the countries and societies, regardless of religious affiliation, both in the core of Austria-Hungary and further to the south of the Balkans, were developed mainly in the twentieth century. More important was the reign of communism in all of these countries, and this is the period that should be observed in order to find general answers.

Basically, some regions which were part of 'western civilization' in the pre-communist era, lost many of their old attributes and developed new ones. These new attributes have proven stronger or more significant at this stage of the societies' development, since the countries that historically belonged to central Europe were cut off from its culture for a long period of time and so developed some new characteristics. These characteristics are common both to post-communist societies of western Christianity and to those of Orthodox affiliation, but are completely strange to countries with no history of communist rule. Hence, these countries can hardly be classed as having the same type of culture as in the past.

This also proves the greater importance of more recent developments in such countries, that is, the experience of communism, than of their distant past, although one cannot dismiss it completely. In such cases, 'western' religion is the only factor that supports the drawing of a line east of these areas. Western Ukraine is a clear example of the mistake of Huntington and others.¹⁰ Although they found a historical basis to include the region in central Europe in the old

empire, and a religious one in western Christianity, they ignored the fact that almost the whole population had experienced nothing but the Soviet Empire in its living memory. Therefore, if the line is in fact necessary, it should be drawn on the border of Slovakia which, it is worth mentioning, was occupied by the Soviets, and Ukraine, which was part of the Soviet Union, regardless of religious similarities or common distant history.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is another example of a region where the population experienced a common history. The only way Bosnians differentiated between themselves was along religious lines. There was never a territorial, or any other divide, of the country or its society. Furthermore, even Huntington admits that there were no serious rifts between Serbs and Croats until the Second World War.¹¹ Thus, one should dismiss clichés and stereotypes about the Balkans in the search for the causes of the war in Bosnia. The fact remains that although the three ethnic groups in Bosnia practise three different religions, they still belong to the same culture.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

So-called ancient ethnic hatred was not in fact widespread in Bosnian society and, therefore, does not have its basis in medieval history. One cannot completely dismiss the existence of animosity between different ethnic communities, but there was far more coexistence, mutual understanding and tolerance than suppressed hatred or open confrontations. Ironically, one can find more ethnic conflicts in twentieth-century Bosnia than during the medieval period from when it is often alleged all this hatred originated. This period of history provides some basis for developments in modern times, but one can hardly find arguments strong enough to prove centuries of hatred among Bosnian ethnic groups. Some Serbian epics may be used as an argument to support the view of hatred in Bosnian society. The best example is the work of Petar Petrovic Njegos, although a Montenegrin himself. In particular, his famous poem *Mountain Wreath* [Gorski vijenac], has been glorified by Serbs, but criticized by many Moslems.¹² However, there are other Serb authors in Bosnian history, such as Aleksa Santic, who witnessed and described events in exactly the opposite terms to Njegos, those of mutual solidarity and tolerance. Both kinds of authors were important for Bosnian culture as a similar division of views also existed among authors from the other two ethnic groups.

This means that two worlds existed: one was a world of hatred towards others, while the other was of love, or tolerance at least, towards the rest of society. If one considers the historical events and developments carefully, it is more likely that the view of solidarity and mutual fate was the stronger or more supported in the communities. These two conceptions formed part of political culture in the past. This was the case during both the Ottoman Empire and the first phase of the Austrian Empire, when ethnic identities were less important politically than in the twentieth century. As in many other countries, occasional confrontations in

the past had some basis in ethnic or religious differences. Bosnia, with three large religious groups, was not an exception.

Different perceptions of rulers, who had always been foreign since the fall of the medieval kingdom in the fifteenth century, led some parts of the population to rebel against the rule of whatever state they belonged to, while other parts were in favour of such rule. Very often, differentiation was along religious lines, but not always. When peasants rebelled, they did so because of their position in society, high taxes and for other similar reasons, not because they were of Christian or Islamic religion. As many rebellions were restricted to smaller regions, they often relied on faith, but this was not the factor that actually inspired the rebellion. It was the position of the social group in its larger environment that determined whether the rule was respected or rebelled against.¹³ After the Turkish (Ottoman) conquest in the fifteenth century, Catholic and Orthodox Christians certainly had reason to dislike the new empire, since it favoured the Islamized part of the population. However, there were no conflicts as long as the empire was strong.

One of the characteristics of Ottoman rule in Bosnia during this period was a relative tolerance of non-Islamic groups. The Jewish communities settled in this region in more significant numbers only after the Turks established their system. Many individuals from other nations, who were later assimilated and disappeared, also arrived in Bosnia during this period. Thus, although Islam was the favoured religion, others were tolerated. This situation lasted for centuries. Preservation of faith, family names and traditions were strong, but did not often result in a hatred of other religious groups. Families and communities developed strong connections amongst themselves in order to preserve their traditions and faith, but this kind of tendency could be found throughout Europe at that time.

The Turkish conquest changed the religious composition of Bosnia. Bosnian Christians [Bosanski krstjani] or 'Bogomils', as some authors name them,¹⁴ disappeared, the number of Orthodox, and especially Catholic, believers decreased and a large group of Moslems emerged. Some authors, as Noel Malcolm has found, connected this fact with the argument that Bosnian Christians were Islamized in order to preserve their position as a ruling elite in society.¹⁵ Although this is very likely, one should not forget that this process lasted for centuries and that many Orthodox and Catholic Christians also took on the new religion in order to preserve or to gain a better position in society. Some well-known contemporary local artists and authors bearing traditional Moslem names, such as the filmmaker Emir Kusturica and writer Mesa Selimovic, have even traced the origins of their families to Orthodox Christian roots. One should, however, note that both these celebrity cases were to be found in Eastern Herzegovina where conversion appears to have been more recent.

Another reason why the three groups did not fight each other as long as the empire was strong was because there were no major grievances among them. As Ottoman rule weakened, rebellions began and violence was used, but again it was aimed either in support of the regime or against it. The most notable

examples are Husein Kapetan Gradiscevic's revolt against the central reforms directed by Istanbul against the preservation of the local elite's benefits; the rebellion of Herzegovinian Serbs on several occasions against foreign rule and the tax system; and of peasants in Bosnia from all religious groups. There were no more cases of violence aimed at other religious groups than in any other country at that time.

If ethnic hatred existed on a larger scale or was to be developed, one might expect to find continuous alliances between certain groups or, at least, serious brutalities committed against the population of a different faith. Individual cases are described in popular epics, but there was no expression of hatred on a large scale. Some collections of poetry and the works of Petar Petrovic Njegos and Vuk Karadzic are the best-known cases. One should note that although they were both influential, they were not actually from Bosnia and did not live there. Compared to France at that time, with its animosity between Catholics and Protestants (despite Huntington's view on these two branches of Christianity), Bosnia was a peaceful and tolerant country for all major religions. Indeed, the prosperous Jewish community settled there in the sixteenth century after being expelled from Spain. Thus, one has no need to look back to medieval times in order to find grounds for ethnic divisions in Bosnia in the 1990s. As Noel Malcolm argues: 'But a closer inspection of Bosnia's history will show that animosities which did exist were not absolute and unchanging. Nor were they the inevitable consequence of the mixing together of different religious communities.'¹⁶

Therefore, the earliest period when it is possible to identify ethnic hatred is the nineteenth century.¹⁷ The rise of romantic nationalism, albeit late in comparison to most of Europe, did not produce a united Bosnian nation. Rather, religious differences provided the basis for defining ethnic groups in Bosnia. Local scholars and priests at the time began their hard work to transform popular religious affiliation into ethnic feeling.¹⁸ It was only during the nineteenth century that the locals called their communities by ethnic rather than religious names. From then on, the Bosnian population was made up mostly of Croats, Serbs and Moslems. Turkish rule and the organization of society must have contributed heavily to this development because they structured, or rather divided, society along religious lines. Priests and scholars merely finished the job.

During the period of imperial decline strong rebellions were organized by the locals. The main aim of the Bosnian Serbs was to support the Montenegrins and Serbs in Serbia in their struggle for independence. Rebellions by Moslems were aimed at preventing organizational changes attempted by Istanbul in the Ottoman lands. Peasant rebellions also highlight the mutual goals of all ethnic groups in their common actions regardless of their ethnic or religious origins. Analysis of the Turkish period undertaken during the Austrian reign clearly proves the origins of peasant rebellions in Bosnia: 'In this connection, one thing is—most surprisingly—overlooked. The agrarian conflict is not between Moslems and

Christians, but between landowners and dependant peasants.'¹⁹ Another witness and observer of the Bosnian rebellions during the 1870s dismissed ethnic, religious and even a political basis for the peasants' insurrections: 'All that I wish to point out is that this insurrection—so pregnant in its consequences—was in its origins Agrarian rather than Political. It was largely an affair of tenant-right.'²⁰

Although the original aims of the various rebellions were different, there were no strong divisions or antagonism among the different groups; rather, these rebellions, albeit different, were directed against the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the causes must have been economic rather than religious. Donia and Fine point out that 'truly ethnic or national conflicts and violence were unknown until the early twentieth century'.²¹ This was also admitted by the incoming Austrian Empire when Count Andrassy stated at the Berlin Congress that the '...agrarian question was the chief source of disorders in the province'.²²

One empire replaced another in 1878. Austria-Hungary brought urbanization, industrial and cultural development to Bosnia, which was already underdeveloped in European terms at that time. When the Turks arrived in the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century, they brought progress to the country. However, internal problems in the empire's later stages prevented further development of the Bosnian economy and culture. One can see Bosnia as a typical example of a region that experienced a time lag, in terms of development, in comparison to western Europe. At the turn of the century it was still a feudal state with large landowners, impoverished peasants, almost no industry and no modern means of transport. The origins of industrialization, a modern economy and the railway came only with the arrival of the Austrian Empire: when the Eastern Empire was replaced by the Western. This could lend weight to the time-lag theory of development. But there is another view concerning the separate development and tradition of Bosnia and the Balkans in general. There is no universal pattern with regard to how societies should be developed and the Balkans is just another example of a region with a different development from western Europe. When it finally came in close contact with the west it proved strange to some western authors, who regarded it as less civilized. However, the aforementioned examples only prove the existence of such views. Historical circumstances certainly made the latter view of a separate process of development appear more accurate. However, the case was that the economy in Bosnia lacked modern technologies while roads and railway hardly existed prior to 1878. A.J.P. Taylor has described Bosnian development in a masterly fashion:

While other European Powers sought colonies in Africa for the purpose, the Habsburg Monarchy exported to Bosnia and Hercegovina its surplus intellectual production—administrators, road builders, archaeologists, ethnographers, and even remittance-men. The two provinces received all the benefits of Imperial rule: ponderous public buildings; model barracks

for the army of occupation; banks, hotels and cafes; a good water supply for the centres of administration and for the country resorts where the administrators and army officers recovered from the burden of Empire.²³

The arrival of the Habsburgs also marked a change in the ethnic structure of Bosnia. A significant number of Moslems left the country, but historians cannot agree how large this number was.²⁴ The Serbs were also leaving some regions, mainly for economic reasons, while a number of new settlers from other parts of Austria-Hungary arrived, encouraged by the empire's policies and economic developments. The minorities, however, made up only 4 per cent of the population and were mainly concentrated in administrative centres. It was the educated classes that were attracted to Bosnia by the prospects of business developing, employment in public services and the state administration. Most of them either left after a spell in the new province or were assimilated by the Slavs. There was no region that could be described as populated by a particular minority.

Therefore, only the relations between local Slavs were important for the future of Bosnia.²⁵ Many Moslems chose to leave, so as to remain within the empire that protected their rights and positions or because they followed Islamic rules which told them not to live in a country of different religion. They were not pressurized by Christians or by the incoming empire. On the contrary, Austria-Hungary did not change most of the privileges enjoyed by local Moslems and left even *sharia* law in existence. More significantly, they left agrarian problems unsolved and proper, serious land reform was not undertaken until the end of the empire. The agrarian question in villages, added to the suppression of some political freedom in towns, brought more hardship to the majority of the population, especially Serbs, while keeping the minority, mainly Moslems, in a privileged position. However, the majority of the population showed various signs of dislike towards the dual monarchy regardless of ethnic background. Herzegovinian historian, Vladimir Corovic, who lived through this period, remarked of the system, The second major characteristic of the Austrian ruling system in Bosnia was a systematic support of mutual wariness and struggle between elements in the country. Turkey was destroying people physically. Austria did it spiritually.'²⁶ This other side to the Habsburg rule is meticulously described by Taylor:

The real achievement of Austria-Hungary was not on show: when the Empire fell in 1918, 88 per cent of the population was still illiterate. Fearful of South Slav nationalism, the Habsburg administrators prevented any element of education or of self-government.²⁷

This example shows that the real feelings of the Slavs in Bosnia during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century could have hardly been positive towards foreign rule. After a long period under a malfunctioning Ottoman

Empire that caused constant instability, Austria brought some kind of order. But the order was not followed by long awaited reforms that could stabilize Bosnia and befriend the locals. Such affairs and the rise of a free Slav state in neighbouring Serbia contributed to a permanently tense situation, but one could hardly speak of proper nationalism yet. The previous example should be added to Taylor's definition of nationalism: 'Nationalism is an intellectual concept, impossible without literacy. The man who cannot read and write speaks a "dialect"; this becomes the "national language" only on the printed page.'²⁸

Hence, it was southern Slavism that emerged as a rival to the empire, not the individual nationalism of some ethnic group, although there was a rise in such ideas as the Serb example clearly shows. The Moslems distinguished themselves as a separate group, playing on both Serbian and Croatian aspirations in order to win them over and declare themselves as members of either of the two groups, but of separate religion. However, it was only in the twentieth century that one could notice more widespread feeling of ethnic belonging among Moslems. Donia describes this Bosnian political phenomena saying that 'the Muslims were anything but unified until well into the first decade of the twentieth century'.²⁹

The Serbs were a different case as their political leaders pursued ambiguous political and national goals. This was certainly because Serbia was a nation state that supported the rise of literacy and cultural and academic institutions which had, in turn, influenced Serbs outside Serbia. The Serb desire to unite with 'brothers' in Serbia lay behind the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand (28 June 1914, in Sarajevo). In 1914, the Southern Slav population under the Habsburgs wanted their own rule and state as their final goal. Meanwhile, Serbia became the local power after the Balkan Wars and some Serbs from Bosnia wanted to unite with the enlarged state. Certainly many citizens in Bosnia, especially students, felt this rule was alien. Several societies, some of them secret, were organized by like-minded individuals. Historians argue to this day whether *Mlada Bosna* [Young Bosnia] was a Serb nationalist or pan-Yugoslav organization. Gavrilo Princip, the assassin of the archduke, said at his trial:

The political union of the Yugoslavs was always before my eyes, and that was my basic idea... I am a Yugoslav nationalist, aiming for the unification of all Yugoslavs, and I do not care what form of state, but it must be free from Austria.³⁰

At the time, many Serbs viewed Greater Serbia as a desired state.³¹ This school of thought can be found much later in 1990s Yugoslav wars, and it was reflected in some academics' arguments of a clear case of aggression from Serbia against Bosnia-Herzegovina. Noel Malcolm, Branka Magas and Brendan Simms, among others, could be put at the forefront of such arguments. Although one cannot dismiss their arguments, my view is that there was more to the origins of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina than pure aggression from Serbia and Croatia. Authors of

this school of thought often miss the important recent developments within Bosnia-Herzegovina itself and pay more attention to the history of tolerance.³² Others clearly state their view of the nature of the war and do not give much importance to the country's internal developments.³³

These arguments could also be seen as a continuation of the argument as to whether creation of Yugoslavia was just an extended Serbia or a proven will of southern Slavs to live together. As popular will was never tested and politics was often elitist, one could only speculate and this is neither the subject nor the method of this work. At the end of Austria-Hungary, there were Serbs, but also some Croats and Moslems who joined pro-Yugoslav organizations as some of the *Mlada Bosna* group were not Serbs.

Croat political aims were also divided. The common goal was self-rule, but some Croats respected the power centre in Vienna and really wanted greater autonomy. Others supported the work of political groups from Croatia that tried to achieve a common Southern Slav state. The leaders at the forefront of the latter line of thought were from Dalmatia—Frano Supilo and Ante Trumbic—while supporters of the former view were directed towards various political groups in Zagreb. There was even cooperation with the groups from Serbia. One of them was led by a Bosnian Croat, later a Nobel Prize winner for literature, Ivo Andric.³⁴

Both Serbian and Croatian intellectual and nationalist circles tried to attract Moslems onto their side. Both kinds of alliances existed during the last years of the empire. It seems that most of the Moslem organizations were more concerned with securing their own rights in the country than with some pan-Slav movement. However, one should note that some young Moslems volunteered to join Serbian forces during the Balkan Wars. Thus, different political visions existed in Bosnia that were often determined by ethnic belonging. The only ones that attracted a significant number of members from all ethnic groups, though predominantly Serbs, seem to be pro-Yugoslav in character. This, however, remains arguable as a referendum for the unification of southern Slavs never took place, nor were there clear independent signs of popular desire with regard to future state building. The new country was established by the will of the politicians and not of the people, but this was hardly unique in Europe at that time.

An important episode in emergent mass-politics happened following the Archduke's assassination in Sarajevo. Many Serbs were attacked and their property looted by angry Moslems and Croats. This could prove hatred on an ethnic basis in society. One can only guess what kinds of feelings were dominant in Bosnia at the time. It is certain that both animosity and tolerance existed at the same time. During the early stages of the First World War, southern Slavs fought each other for the first time, reluctantly however. The Austrian army mobilized subjects from all its lands, including Bosnia, and sent them to the front line against Serbian troops (and to other fronts). Some Bosnians, mainly Serbs, drafted into the *KundK* army (Austro-Hungarian Empire Army) deserted and opted to surrender to their fellow Slavs.

It was not until the creation of the first Yugoslavia after the war that the first serious rifts among the Bosnian people came into being. This period was marked by the emergence of mass politics, which proved to be crucial for later developments. Political organizations were founded during the Austrian rule but the vote and representation were not universal in practice: only the tiny, and usually the richest, social groups, in all three ethnic corps were involved in political struggles. Most of the population was left on the margins of political, social and cultural life in the Habsburgs' Bosnia. As A.J.P. Taylor found:

The provinces received Diets on the Austrian pattern. Since the provincial Diets now performed large administrative functions, it had been essential to maintain the representation of the great estates; therefore, despite the introduction of universal suffrage for the Reichsrat, the Diets were left with the old restricted suffrage and the system of 'curial' constituencies.³⁵

This proves not only the elitist politics in pre-Yugoslav Bosnia but also the real character of the empire, which really cared only about its own power and geo-strategic interests. The final aim was rather conservative: to prevent any change, even a positive one, because it could disturb both international and internal relations and policies. Hence, the paradox and over representation of Moslem large landowners, naturally supporters of the past Turkish Empire, in the elected bodies.³⁶ Still, the lack of involvement of the masses in political and social-cultural life prevented any historian or politician from clearly proving the popular attitudes of the period. Modern mass politics emerged only with the creation of Yugoslavia.

The ethnic character of most of the created political parties and cultural organizations could be linked to the rise of serious rifts among Bosnian peoples. One has, however, to look at the wider political scene, the Yugoslav one, in order to understand the political trends. The new multi-ethnic common state actually replaced the old multi-ethnic empire. Thus national or ethnic feelings were not suppressed but were acknowledged even in the original name of the state—the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Although all ethnic groups were not recognized as such, the clear religious distinction of all Bosnian ethnic groups was acknowledged and the economic and social interests of such groups were differentiated.

However, the acknowledgement was never enough to solve the ethnic question and one might even say that the new regime and state actually created, if not helped to develop further, problems. Land reform was necessary to break finally with the old feudal system, but it created an ethnic problem since most of the previous owners had been Moslems. They were promised a substantial compensation but this never fully materialized.³⁷

The emerging Serb and Croat bourgeoisie and the young industrialist class had their own interests. The leading Croat party, HSS—the Croatian Peasant Party [Hrvatska seljacka stranka]—consistently complained that the land reform did

not go far enough and that the holdings, on average, remained rather small for a developed agrarian country. Furthermore, a centralized state was imposed against the wishes of Croatia. This led to a turbulent parliamentary life and even to the assassination of the Croatian leaders.³⁸ These events only made this political party stronger and it continued to demand autonomy for all Croats within Yugoslavia and the determination of Croatian political territory. When it finally happened, at the end of the first Yugoslavia, it was already far too late to improve the inter-ethnic relations within the state and save it from inevitable collapse. Throughout the period of the first Yugoslavia (1 December 1918 to 6 April 1941) the HSS remained the leading Croatian party.

Serb peasants rebelled from the beginning, taking over by force the land they considered theirs by right. Eastern Herzegovina, the centre of many rebellions under the Turks and Austrians, retained such a character.³⁹ The Serbian Army and the new state managed to keep some order in the province, but Eastern Herzegovina remained poor and the land did not become more cultivated or richer. This region, like most of Herzegovina and large parts of Bosnia, remained poorly developed. While the Croats and Moslems expressed a homogeneous political will and supported mainly one party in the respective ethnic corps, Bosnian Serbs expressed some uniqueness even from Serbs in general. Many peasants supported the Serbian Agrarian Party, in which it found its stronghold. This is another proof of the importance of land and agrarian reform in Bosnia. This party, however, remained rather small and never managed to compete with the Radical Party or the Democratic Party, which were the two main political forces in the whole of Yugoslavia, and also the main parties in Bosnia with its relative Serbian majority in population.

There were also different perceptions of the new state and the monarchy. The 'Piedmont view' was expressed by many Serbs who regarded the new kingdom as their own, significantly enlarged, country. Croats were reunited with fellow Slavs and finally liberated from Hungarian and Italian attempts to take over some parts, if not the whole, of Croatia. But they also opposed Serbian hegemony and fought through the HSS party for equal ethnic rights. The Moslems were mainly concerned about retaining their religious, educational and cultural rights and, in the later phase of the monarchy, they participated as a swing party in important decisions taken on behalf of one or another coalition government in Belgrade. The Yugoslav Moslem Organisation, JMO [*Jugoslovenska muslimanska organizacija*—was the only political representative of the Bosnian Moslems. Some other Moslem parties were formed but they never managed to enter parliament.⁴⁰ A major concession given to the JMO by the Radicals in power was the preservation of Bosnian historical boundaries, which remained unchanged despite a long forgotten medieval independence.

However, the inter-war economic depression destroyed economies in many agrarian countries including Yugoslavia, and Bosnia within it, whilst political relations further deteriorated during the same period. As politics was often based on ethnic belonging, inter-ethnic relations also deteriorated. The 1930s were

characterized by King Aleksandar's dictatorship, which did not leave much room for political activity. It was during this period that Bosnia lost its historical, provincial character and was divided, like the rest of Yugoslavia, into *banovinas*, larger regions named after major rivers in order to eradicate the ethnic character of the territory. Yugoslavia was divided into nine such territories, four of which incorporated some Bosnian land. Most of the local administrators and governors were Serbs, giving even more grounds for dissent among the Croats.⁴¹ Moslems, however, supported most of their actions, or at least their political representatives did. Even when Bosnia was divided between the Serbs and the Croats towards the end of this organization of politics in 1939, by creation of the Croatian Banovina, the JMO (Moslem) leaders supported the new order 'in the belief that it would strengthen the Yugoslav state'.⁴² Croatian Banovina thus became the only ethnic entity, albeit short lived, that was created to suppress dissent among Croats.

This division into Serb and Croat spheres of influence was to be repeated in attempts to divide the country during the 1990s. By this time, however, Moslem national identity was much more developed. Thus, politics reflected ethnic identification, which was certainly strong enough to shape democratic politics. One may see some perpetual pattern in Bosnian political life. There are forces in both Serbian and Croatian political corps that argue and fight for an inclusion of Bosnia in their nation states and regard Moslems as a part of their own ethnicity, although of a different religion. The Moslems' major concern is the preservation of Bosnia, since only within it can their own character be preserved and the political nation further developed. This is true despite the support for Bosnian division in 1939. At the time of the division, inter-ethnic relations deteriorated to such an extent that a collapse of the state was a clear possibility. The question was, what would happen to Bosnia if Yugoslavia was dissolved? The only party interested in the preservation of Bosnia was Moslem, but it was never strong enough to lead the struggle by either political or violent means. Therefore, they had to opt for a political alternative that would preserve any kind of Yugoslav state. The price was the political division of Bosnia.

Foreign threat, the dire economic situation, strong nationalism and a malfunctioning state-system finally led to the end of the first Yugoslavia. Thus, ethnic divisions were caused by the policies of the ruling parties in the first Yugoslavia. One could find some historical causes, as described earlier, but they had to be exploited by the leaders in order to be made deep and serious enough for a break up of the state following the Nazi invasion. One should bear in mind that the communists were originally the third largest party in the state, but were banned in 1921.⁴³ Although seriously weakened, this force certainly had a basis for political and military struggle in the years to come during the war. Two decades of illegal activity actually prepared the communists for wartime conditions. Some public support, although secret, must have remained and provided a recruitment basis for the partisans later on. Nationalist forces were certainly already strong and engaged themselves in military-political battles.

However, most nationalists collaborated, to a greater or smaller extent, with the Nazis. The Second World War in Yugoslavia, and especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was actually a three-fold war. Firstly, there was the Axis occupation; secondly, there was the civil war between ethnic groups; and thirdly was the victorious communist revolution.

The Axis powers divided Yugoslavia. All of Bosnia was incorporated into a puppet 'Independent State of Croatia', which was in turn split into German and Italian zones of interests. The worst atrocities were committed by Croatian extreme nationalists—the *Ustasha*—primarily against Serbs, but also against other ethnic groups and political opponents. This pushed many Serbs into the resistance movement, of which the partisans provided the most secure and fearsome force. The Chetniks, Serb royalists, meanwhile engaged in occasional battles with aggressors but were much more active in taking revenge on the Moslem population, especially in eastern Bosnia. The Moslems were recruited by some *Ustasha* and German military units, but the majority remained neutral in the beginning. A number of Croats and Moslems, especially during the later stages of the war, joined the partisans, making it a truly multi-ethnic force. Thus, all nationalist military forces actually followed the political patterns of the end of the first Yugoslavia.

The communist partisans arose as the only force opposed to ethnic divisions and hatred, and became the only serious resistance movement. This proved to be the most significant historical period, on which some of the recent negative developments can be based. But again, it was not sparked without an important push from outside as the Germans 'set its components against each other in an unprecedented way, for never before had there been physical conflict among the Yugoslav peoples as such'.⁴⁴ The brutalities committed against each other, foreign occupation and terrible conditions—very much caused by the former two—made the partisans an even more attractive force to the peasant population of Bosnia-Herzegovina and, later on, to the rest of Yugoslavia. A small number of intellectuals may have accepted the ideology, but it did not mean the same to the peasants. In order to understand the popular attitude of Yugoslavs towards this ideology, it is important to think of the rural character of the country. As one of the leading partisans, Milovan Djilas, described it:

Communism had become linked with patriarchal justice and sacrifice. More significantly, it was the one movement that offered these bright but poor mountaineers any prospect of extricating themselves from their isolation and neglect. The ideal joined with necessity.⁴⁵

Military successes, huge political work, especially on inter-ethnic relations and the international circumstances that led to the end of the war, gave the communists the opportunity to form the Second Yugoslavia as a federation based on a communist ideology. It was a totalitarian state in its essence, but was also supported by the majority of all ethnic groups for reasons mentioned earlier,

especially those given by Djilas. The nature of Yugoslav socialism was significantly different to socialism in the rest of eastern Europe. With the exception of Albania, after the creation of the Soviet Union, the Yugoslav communist revolution was the only authentic revolution in Europe. Therefore people's attitudes towards the ideology and the system were more positive and they did not feel so imposed upon as elsewhere.

POST-WAR YUGOSLAVIA

It is logical and natural after such a tragic experience of civil war, which ended victoriously for the partisans, that they put ethnic equality at the forefront of their policies. Their approach was usually described as the policy of 'brotherhood and unity'. Over the years, it seemed to be the answer to the ethnic division and instability of the previous state. The solution for the first Yugoslavia's ethnic problems was found in federation. The combination of a federal state and soft-communism created conditions for much needed economic and cultural development, especially in devastated Bosnia-Herzegovina. Both the Turkish and Austrian empires had regarded Bosnia-Herzegovina as a separate entity and thus secured peace on this basis. The first Yugoslavia broke this rule, that is, it divided Bosnia administratively on several occasions, culminating in the final division of 1939, and ended its existence in blood. The second Yugoslavia followed the example of the old empires.

The first years of communist rule were not very different from the situation elsewhere behind the Iron Curtain. But there is another argument about the nature of Southern Slav communism. Stalin was never pleased with this branch of 'world revolution', even before the split in 1948. According to Djilas, he said of Tito's government, 'No, your government is not Soviet—you have something in between de Gaulle's France and the Soviet Union.'⁴⁶ Tito also compared the two paths of communism: 'They do not like talking of democracy because, for them, it is a trite capitalist phrase. Hence they talk of a dictatorship of proletariat. I recognise their dictatorship but it is not proletarian but bureaucratic dictatorship.'⁴⁷

These views, despite the similarities between the two societies in the first post-war years, show clearly that Yugoslavia, from the very beginning, should be analysed as distinct from the rest of the communist world. This fact remains even though many, including Stevan Pavlowitch, rightly put historical events in order: 'Titoism was the consequence, not the cause, of the clash with Stalin. It was the result of the efforts made by a particular Party leadership to stay in power in spite of Stalin.'⁴⁸

For this study, it is irrelevant whether it was a reason or a consequence; the fact is that a separate political system and doctrine were established in Yugoslavia under Tito. Another major difference to the rest of the communist world was the proper decentralization of the state. Careful observance of inter-ethnic relations was a constant feature in Yugoslavia and the republics grew

much stronger. Equality of all ethnic groups was imposed and preserved most of the time. Economic development, a significant improvement in the standard of living, security and the suppression of any political thought critical of the ruling ideology at its very roots, were major characteristics of the system. On this basis the communists handled ethnic politics. Although it was not transparent, political leaders in Bosnia Herzegovina were always chosen according to the principle that all three ethnic groups would be represented equally. The politicians, however, never acted as ethnic representatives, but as leaders of the whole Bosnian political nation. This kind of rule secured peaceful, and indeed prosperous, inter-ethnic relations in the country.

Bosnia was a unique republic in the Yugoslav federation. It was the only one that was not actually a 'nation-state' for some of the Yugoslav nations, but was 'small Yugoslavia'.⁴⁹ Great improvements in the conditions of living, industrialization and the economic development of a once very backward and rural community, created positive popular feelings towards the system and especially towards Tito. Many foreign experts on the country, including Donia and Fine, understood the situation: 'Critics, who often focus on inequalities that continued to exist among Yugoslavia's regions, have tended to overlook or understate the extent of this economic transformation. But for Bosnians the changes were highly visible and rapid.'⁵⁰

It was not only the population that cultivated the strongest myths about Tito, the leadership was often mythologized even by their colleagues in the other republics. Other authors saw Bosnia under such leadership as a very closed society and the regime was even sometimes described as Stalinist. Pavlowitch expertly compares the different implementation of the Yugoslav model in various republics: '...from Bosnia-Herzegovina at its most closed to Slovenia at its most open. If the Party turned its eyes away from the bastion of neo-Stalinism that is the central republic [of Bosnia]...' ⁵¹ This kind of rule, too strongly judged as neo-Stalinism, lasted for two decades in Bosnia. The growing power of the republics within the Yugoslav federation enabled regions to develop differently under communist rule. Thus, Slovenia became the centre of more liberal ideas under the communists, while Bosnia, under members of the same party, at least officially, became a rather closed society. One can understand that the differences had a basis in separate historical developments that brought about variances in the implementation of the common communist ideology. Slovenia, as an ethnically homogeneous republic observed inter-ethnic relations within its borders in a more liberal way, while the Bosnian regime was very tight in this area. As the ethnic question was at the core of communist rule, the whole system became very strict. However, it culminated in the implosion of the system before the 'year of revolution' in east and central Europe, and before the rise of institutional nationalism in the Yugoslav republics.

The independent development of events in Bosnia during the 1970s and 1980s brought about economic success and prosperity, albeit only in Bosnian terms, but also a tight control over political and cultural life and a carefully observed

nationalities policy. It is this period that is often overlooked by experts explaining the nature of Bosnian war in terms of Serbian aggression. Although the events are sometimes acknowledged by the authors, they are not given their true significance that, through numerous streams of events, they helped a path to the war in 1990s.

The lack of nationalistic incidents and the above-mentioned achievements made the leadership all too powerful. Its grip on power ended only in a series of financial scandals discovered in 1987 that were followed by the discovery of personal mismanagement and incompetence. Very few authors actually recognize the importance of these events in their analysis. They are often mentioned only when they concentrate on events in the rest of the Federation. However, these other events certainly had a great deal of influence over Bosnia, and the importance of Agrokomerc (a Bosnian food processing company) and its consequences can be judged, even now, by ongoing public discussion in Bosnia on the origins and legacy of the affair. One of the few authors who actually understood the significance of the scandals in Bosnia was Bennett, although he did not go far in his analysis: The final nail in the coffin of communist credibility came...[in 1987] when Agrokomerc, a Bosnian food processing company, disintegrated. It...though bankrupt for years, had survived through a series of “political” loans.⁵²

Agrokomerc brought about changes on a personal level in the highest ranks of the regime, but more importantly the regime's nature and policy had been changed. These facts have often been omitted by many analyses of Bosnian society. However, had they not happened, there would have been a very different situation in Bosnia in 1990 when the multiparty elections took place. Whether an ethnic politics would have become dominant is only a matter of speculation, but without these changes the chances of the introduction of democracy would have been significantly lowered. All of these were unique features, when compared to the rest of the Federation, which enabled the sudden liberalization of society and the gradual democratization of political life in Bosnia in the late 1980s.

The lack of a developed civil society, even in comparison with other Yugoslav republics, was another characteristic of Bosnia in the late 1980s. As the very notion of civil society was not acceptable to communist ideology, the strong regime that controlled society prevented the conditions for developing a concept that could lead to the democratization of society by peaceful means. As politics was imposed on society from above, it would take the collapse of the regime to start the development of civil society. By then, however, another kind of politics—ethnic rather than communist—would come to influence and further delay the composition of a society that has control over politics.

Meanwhile, the successful but belated economic reforms of the Federal Government could not suppress growing discontent, due to the long period of economic crisis, which had already alienated large parts of the population from the ruling system and its ideology. Susan Woodward has seen an economic basis to the ethnic discomfort of later years:

The combination of an economic policy aimed at promoting exports to Western markets and declining domestic investment in transport, construction and industries such as mining, timber and heavy industry, were leading to deindustrialisation in the poor interior of Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina, areas which happened to be ethnically mixed.⁵³

Under such economic conditions the population, not only in Bosnia, but in general, tended to accept extreme ideologies. The rise of fascism in Italy and Germany in the 1930s came during a prolonged economic crisis. In such circumstances radical solutions are often sought, and if a political crisis prevents mainstream political forces from offering a solution promising enough for the masses, they tend to seek more extreme voices. Extreme political forces easily determine who is to blame for problems—they not us—and this ideology becomes acceptable to the population. Thus minorities, political or ethnic, are blamed for problems. Although the economic problems are not solved, the leaders of this doctrine gain popularity and secure power. The people see a strong leader who arrives after a period of a weak state. Popular expectations and personal power actually feed on each other and direct the people towards more extreme policies. It was from this pattern that nationalism in Serbia emerged once more and Milosevic secured his personal power.

Nationalism in the ethnically mixed communities is an extreme political doctrine. As developments in some other parts of the Federation, primarily in Serbia, caused by the establishment of institutional nationalism produced a strong leader in Milosevic, the Bosnian leadership, newly in power and lacking in proper experience and charisma, certainly became less attractive for rural Serbs. Faced with economic problems, disappointed with previous Bosnian leaders who fell from power in disgrace, and with Milosevic's (unrealistic) promises in view, they opted to support his ideas and ethnically homogenize. In turn, other ethnic communities followed their example.

As democratic changes were introduced in most of the former communist bloc, they became inevitable in Bosnia too. The collapse of the communist system in Bosnia was followed by a crisis in ethnic relations for the reasons described earlier. The introduction of democracy, the power vacuum that appeared in Bosnia in the late 1980s and growing extreme nationalism in neighbouring republics set up the conditions for the rise of domestic nationalist politics, that is, Moslem, Serb and Croat. The disintegration of the state thus became inevitable. The reason for this was the competitive nationalism of leading political parties that were, in turn, supported in their ethnic communities. Popular nationalism was produced by political powers. It was nationalism from above and therefore it was politics not history, which created the preconditions for the final collapse.

My central argument is that it was the crucial stream of political developments, triggered by a series of scandals in 1987 and 1988, which led to war, even though economic factors were important. The political elite was changed independently of the events in the other republics. The new leadership was weak and allowed

the appearance of democratic forces that, in turn, made Bosnia more liberal than its neighbours. However, society was in a deep crisis and none of the forces on the political stage was able to lead the way to reforms. Nationalist incidents in some of the provincial towns gave grounds, together with influences from Croatia and Serbia, to ethnic politics. Neither democrats nor reformed communists had much of a chance in competition with the nationalists. But another proof that the majority of the population, regardless of the rise of nationalism and popular support for ethnic parties, was not ready for or supportive of ethnic confrontation, lies in the fact that nationalist parties cooperated during the pre-electoral campaign and promised to continue doing so once in power. The conflict was not envisaged, but quickly became apparent. However, even in power, the extreme nationalist policies could not coexist in peace and could not produce long awaited reforms.

The conditions for conflict were not, however, produced exclusively in Bosnia. External factors also contributed to the setting up of a situation in Bosnia that was to be resolved in conflict. The second Yugoslavia should be described most accurately as Tito's Yugoslavia. Without him, it simply could not function and had to be either reformed or dissolved. As Ivan Ivekovic found:

He died in 1980 and left behind obtuse *apparatchiks* with no idea whatsoever and who just strived to keep swimming protected with the charisma of their dead patron. It was 'Tito's policy without Tito' but it did not work as it used.⁵⁴

This policy destroyed the state. The republics' oligarchies fought between themselves, producing ever more nationalistic tendencies in society. When the political means of the opposing policies, primarily Serbian, Slovene and Croatian, were exploited with no resolution, they all found that the only achievement was the destruction of the common federation. The by-product of this destruction was the creation of a new identity in each of the republics. In place of the class identity developed under Tito, his followers managed, possibly without intending to, to produce ethnic identities. The problem was to impose new boundaries between the ethnically identified subjects of such policies. Ethno-nationalist interests overlapped territorially and this was the cause of conflict once the common state was destroyed. If these interests had not been in mutual conflict the dissolution of Yugoslavia would have been peaceful.

Thus, the crisis of the system developed into a crisis of identity. Class identity, or any other social identity, was replaced by ethnic identity. Hence, the crisis had to be resolved in accordance with this identity. The problem was that ethnic identity did not respect political identity and as a consequence it deepened the crisis in society. Once ethnic identities had been firmly established and extreme nationalists brought to power in all the republics, Bosnia was at its most vulnerable, since both Serbs and Croats found new loyalties outside their own republic. The Moslems were in a different position, putting their efforts into

strengthening a separate Bosnian identity and loyalty that, in turn, alienated the other two groups even further. Political and, by now, territorial conflict was ever more determined to be solved by force, as the nationalists strengthened their position in power. Ivekovic has given the clearest picture of the situation:

Then the loyalty of entire segments of the population shifted towards mutually exclusive etnonationalist [*sic*] political projects and in the first pluralist elections the electorate split along ethnic fault-lines supporting nationalist parties. Once in control of various republics these parties used state coercion in order to build institutions which will further consolidate their separate ethnic constituencies now promoted into nation-states.⁵⁵

The remaining competition between the 'nation-states' was an arms race that was destined to be won by the Serbs. They were the highest populated nation with a disproportionately high percentage of army officers. The army, in turn, showed clear loyalty towards communist ideology, which they saw could be preserved by opting for Milosevic who covered his nationalism with ideological signs, however formal they might have been, of faithfulness to the ideals close to the minds of generals. Thus two loyalties, ideological and ethnic, although the latter could also be described as ideological, were fulfilled and the Serbs entered the armed battles as the strongest force. The others were destined to illegal financial arrangements and smuggling deals to strengthen their own arguments and prepare for the wars. But, by then, the state—Yugoslavia—had already been destroyed, while Bosnia—as a nation-state—never really functioned; total collapse is the closest description of its affairs in 1991. This collapse was helped to a great extent by the behaviour and dealings of the ruling parties. In explaining the politics and society in Bosnia during the period that marked the end of Yugoslavia, I intend to follow advice given by Ivekovic in his analysis of the Yugoslav drama:

What is needed instead, at least for a comprehensive explanation of our conflict, is a multidisciplinary approach which will take into account the hectic but slow flow of history, changing geopolitical constraints, new global economic trends, as well as the social, psychological and cultural drama of modernization.⁵⁶

Therefore, the age of a strong communist rule in Bosnia will be thoroughly examined with particular research into and analysis of the nationalities policy. There are only primary sources available on this period in Bosnian history, although some patterns can be established for a more universal understanding and comparative approach to the subject. The end of the regime is also often omitted in the works of contemporary authors. Some secondary sources will shed plenty of light on the economic origins of the decline of the system, while research interviews, party documents, Yugoslav periodicals and press reports

will enable a thorough examination of the social changes that brought about the later rise of nationalism and ethnic politics. Finally, the analysis of the political and social developments within Bosnia during the early 1990s, based on numerous primary sources, should help explain the collapse of the state. Outside factors—nationalist politics in Serbia and Croatia—contributed heavily to the state of affairs in Bosnia, but so far there have been very few authors admitting this and analysing the period in Bosnia itself. This should help explain how many of the origins of the war were set up within society, while external factors helped to make the end inevitable.

NOTES

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8. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
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10. See Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, p. 261.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
12. Njegos, Petrovic, P., *Gorski Vijenac* (Belgrade: Knjiga Komerc, 1999).
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16. *Ibid.*, p. xxi.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 126–7.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
19. Grunberg, K., 'Bosnia-Hercegovina: The Land Question, 1878–1910' in Cushing, Tappe, Pinto et al. (eds), *Contrasts in Emerging Societies*, p. 385.
20. Evans, A., *Through Bosnia and the Herzegovina on Foot* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1877), p. 336.

21. See Donia and Fine, *Bosnia and Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed*, p. 112.
22. Dedijer, V., *The Road to Sarajevo* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967), p. 79.
23. See Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809±1918*, p. 166.
24. See Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, pp. 139–43.
25. See Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 289.
26. Corovic, V., *Bosna i Hercegovina* (Belgrade: Srpska Krjizevna zadruga, 1925).
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28. Ibid., p. 24.
29. Donia, R.J., *Islam Under the Double Eagle: The Muslims of Bosnia and Hercegovina, 1878±1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 185.
30. See Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, p. 341.
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32. See Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*.
33. Simms, B., *Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Penguin, 2001).
34. See Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, p. 153.
35. See Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809±1918*, pp. 234–5.
36. Ibid., p. 235.
37. See Donia and Fine, *Bosnia and Hercegovina*, p. 127.
38. Stjepan Radic, leader of the HSS was shot together with four other party colleagues in Parliament on 20 June 1928.
39. See Donia and Fine *Bosnia and Hercegovina*, p. 122.
40. Ibid., p. 124.
41. Ibid., p. 129.
42. Ibid., p. 132.
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44. Pavlowitch, S., *The Improbable Survivor: Yugoslavia and its Problems 1918±1988* (London: C.Hurst & Company, 1988), p. 14.
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47. Sijan, D., *Moc Titove rijeci* (Zagreb: Stylos, 1971), p. 178.
48. See Pavlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor*, p. 41.
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51. See Pavlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor*, p. 154.
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55. Ibid., pp. 256–7.

Balkans: Dilemmas on the Eve of the 21st Century (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1998), p. 259.

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1

The Ruling System

In order to understand later events, especially with regards to nationalism, it is important to describe the basis on which the state was built under the communists. With the importance of nationalist politics established in the 1990s, one has to have an especially careful view of the communist regime in Bosnia, with regards to its nationalities policy. The Yugoslav system was successful in mobilizing popular support and had certain unique features compared with other communist countries, in particular self-management and, later on, the freedom to travel. Nevertheless, it was still tightly controlled from above and much of what happened has to be explained in terms of elite behaviour. In particular, in Bosnia, communist rule mixed with a traditional social structure, where clientelism, cronyism, patronage and kinship networks were widely prevalent. While the Yugoslav federation was becoming ever more decentralized, the elite were much more focused on the leadership of the republics. Each republic became a virtually autonomous, separate communist model, which some authors have described as ‘decentralized totalitarianism’.¹

Thus, Yugoslavia was decentralized but was not democratized. Bosnia-Herzegovina was no exception. Although the leaders were much more loyal to Tito and the partisan tradition than those in the other republics, from the 1970s onwards, they developed their own characteristic set of policies. In this chapter, society and the economy will be discussed, followed by politics in Bosnia during the 1970s and, finally, the relation between the party and the population will be analysed.

SOCIETY AND ECONOMY IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA 1945–1980

The period from the 1970s to the early 1980s was a ‘golden time’ for the political elite in Bosnia, which had secured its absolute power by the early 1970s in the typical communist fashion of climbing up the hierarchy. Their rule gave to Bosnia-Herzegovina much needed long-term stability, which was achieved by firm control over the state and society. With the background of the Second World War and the civil war fought in the republic as a side effect, ethnic issues were certainly very important and were exemplified by the ruling ideology.

Popular attitudes, however, could be judged only on the basis of a very few incidents and events, since society was tightly controlled and dissidents were all but non-existent. Most of the regime's credibility had its roots in 'solving' the ethnic question and, in Bosnian terms, in significant economic development.

The character of the social system in Bosnia is analysed as the basis for later developments in society. This was a period of further decentralization in Yugoslavia. The republics started to differ more significantly from each other. There was still, however, a unifying factor in the person of President Tito. Despite his presence, some new problems started to appear in Yugoslavia. Ivo Lederer found a clear pattern

...which in the mid-1960s reached disquieting proportions. The process of decentralization in agriculture and industry, and altogether the general trend of political and cultural liberalization, appear to have created special problems among the nationalities. The effort to uplift the undeveloped southern parts of the country...while maintaining the momentum of industrial development in the north has strained the nation's limited resources... The resulting uncertainties, even in the face of relative prosperity, have produced manifestations of economic nationalism, particularly in Croatia and Serbia.²

Bosnian society, meanwhile, was free of such manifestations, which would have divided the republic's economy. Two major factors were crucial for the preservation of economic unity in Bosnia-Herzegovina and its further development, despite external problems. The first was the personality and role of Tito. The second factor was the leadership in Sarajevo and its policy. This followed the example of the other republics and made the economy more self-sufficient but, at the same time, played on the political unity of the federation, which Tito especially liked as an example. Thus, the leadership achieved credibility externally while internally imposing firm control over society and preventing any development, economic or political, that could ruin such policy. Their Titoism also gained them internal credibility, as did economic development and the improvement of the standard of living. This rule should be analysed in more detail because it lasted until the very beginning of the collapse of the system in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the rise of nationalism in neighbouring republics.

Most of the land and companies were nationalized during the early post-war years. Private ownership of agricultural land was restricted to relatively small possessions. Land reform and the colonization of deserted farms in plains formerly populated by Germans, or by wealthy landowners who had withdrawn with the Nazis or had been expelled in post-war years, was very popular among poor peasants. Some sources put the number of colonized peasants from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Vojvodina at 85,442.³ At the same time, colonized land was given within Bosnia-Herzegovina as well while companies were nationalized as a first step towards industrialization and urbanization. The reason for

nationalization was ideological, of course, as communists did everything to change the society and put it in line with their own political doctrine.

Before the war, only 2 per cent of the population had been employed in Bosnian industry, while 17 per cent of the population lived in the cities.⁴ Industrialization efforts attracted a huge, unqualified workforce to the developing towns. This policy prevented poverty, which had been common in rural areas, and also created a huge proletarian force in the towns. It effectively solved one problem and even created the basis for solving the other. Instead of poverty and a lack of perspectives in the villages, new generations were presented with work in the town. This enabled the fast industrialization of the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina, or at least its major urban centres. Figures for industrial productivity during the 1940s show the success of this policy:

In major fields of industry in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the product was doubled. Electric energy, in relation to 1946, grew to 192%, coal mining to 194%, agricultural tools to 376%, wood industry to 247%, etc. The number of employed workers in 1947 was bigger by 66% than in 1937.⁵

If one compares these achievements to the whole of Yugoslavia, Bosnia is an especially successful story, but one has to bear in mind the inherited underdevelopment and backwardness of the republic in comparison to the rest of Yugoslavia, where the industrial product was 67 per cent higher during the first post-war year than during the pre-war period.⁶ The decrease of agriculture in the domestic product in Bosnia is clearly visible: in 1952 it amounted to 27.2 per cent, while in 1983 it was only 13.7 per cent.⁷ Social and economic trends of urbanization and industrialization can be better understood by comparing the percentage of the population working in agriculture. In 1948 some 72 per cent of the whole Bosnian population participated in agriculture, while in 1961 it was 50.2 per cent. In 1971 it was just over a third—36.6 per cent.⁸ This also means that agricultural productivity per capita was lower than industrial productivity, because a larger part of the population participated in the field of agriculture than in manufacturing.

The state of Bosnian society can be even better understood by the fact that official estimates put the number of illiterate adults at 900,000 in 1945.⁹ Huge action by the regime managed to dwarf this problem relatively quickly but in the 1980s illiteracy remained a paradigm of Bosnian society. In 1971, there were still 672,000 illiterate people in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹⁰ This will be analysed in later chapters.

Another important characteristic of the Bosnian economy, and of society as a whole, is similar to that of the whole of Yugoslavia: a separate and unique development of industrial relations and a system of self-management that was introduced during the 1950s. One could argue whether this introduction was a consequence of the international relations of the time or a thoughtful experiment. For the purpose of this book it is irrelevant. The international situation certainly

contributed to this step, since the country was not a member of either of the alliances in the Cold War. Socialist selfmanagement was introduced both as an experiment and an answer to ideological challenges in the East and the West. Social ownership stood in a similar correlation to private and state ownership, just as the whole system was positioned between the two political and economic blocks. This experiment made the country unique in terms of discussions of contemporary political systems and in comparison to the rest of communist Europe.

The regime was certainly oppressive. It was during the 1950s that the first dissidents appeared within the party ranks. Tito's former ally, Milovan Djilas, was even imprisoned for his increasingly liberal views, but this had very little, if any, effect in Bosnia. Lack of dissent was a long-standing feature of society in Bosnia-Herzegovina under the communist reign. Even at the first elections in 1945, when there was a choice to vote for or against the communists, in Bosnia-Herzegovina there was only 4.79 per cent of votes against the regime while, in Yugoslavia as a whole, it was 9.5 per cent.¹¹ This shows the general attitude towards the communist system in Bosnia-Herzegovina to be more deep-rooted than in the rest of Yugoslavia. Therefore, dissent and dissidents were rare.

Alongside the previous example, efforts to develop new relations in the market economy give a much better view into the nature of the system in Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina within it. The reforms initiated during the 1950s were continued into the 1960s, but many important aspects were abandoned in the late 1960s. The reform that would have led to a proper market economy could not work under the political system's lack of competition. In a state where politics dictated the market, this was impossible. Politics would lose its grip on the system and the only permissible political force, the communists, would have endangered their own positions in society. Furthermore, the first generation of communist leaders was no longer young, energetic and courageous. As they grew older, they were increasingly ready to compromise and abandon potentially dangerous reforms. This form of degenerate governing is typical of any state where the same elite remains in power for too long.

This was the period of the first fall in the number of employed people in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the post-war period. Although there were 483,500 employed, a decrease of a half per cent, the unemployment rate was more significant. It was 60.7 per cent higher in 1968 than in 1964.¹² One of the solutions was the freedom to travel and the introduction of the *gastarbeiter* workers (literally, a guest worker) in Western Europe.

Although urbanization and industrialization were very important and ever present features in post-war Yugoslavia, they were no longer solving problems. Bosnia-Herzegovina was especially underdeveloped, even when compared to the other republics. The republic's industry was based on mining, metallurgy and other basic manufacturing, while more sophisticated industries were located elsewhere. Bosnia-Herzegovina was an important source of resources for the Yugoslav economy, and was also important in political terms. The greatest care

of inter-ethnic relations was taken in it, the most orthodox communist ideology was developed there and the republic was the last to opt for the development of a self-sufficient economy. Major changes in this new policy were made in the 1970s when the new generation of political leaders took over from the former partisans. They were the ones who inaugurated a policy of Bosnian equality with the rest of Yugoslavia.

An understanding of the elite is of key importance, since in many ways Yugoslavia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular, can be typified as totalitarian. Two features of the system were unique. Firstly, the insistence on self-management and social management added layers of complexity to the system. Secondly, the freedom to travel led to the emergence of a new class of repatriated workers with funds to invest. Under these conditions, Bosnian leaders were ready to reorganize the republic and to prevent further migration to the few industrial centres.

Thus, the leaders in Sarajevo secured the stability of political life in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The economic aspects of life in the republic during the 1970s were improving, with growing power in the hands of a few new communist leaders. Almost none of them could have gained their legitimacy from participation in the Second World War, as they were too young to belong to the partisan movement from the beginning. Therefore, their prestige was linked to practical results in political and, especially, economic fields during the 1970s. They built up several large and successful companies that functioned as monopolies in the semi-planned economy. Less successful companies were merged with larger ones, thus concentrating capital in a few very large companies. The general managers of these conglomerates were ordered to participate in establishing a factory in every community in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Local unemployment rates fell and the index of the largest Yugoslav companies showed an over-representation of this republic. Almost every year, economic indexes of the Federal Bureau for Statistics showed at least four Bosnian companies to be among the ten financially largest companies in Yugoslavia. These were: Energoinvest, Sarajevo; Unis, Sarajevo; Sipad, Sarajevo; and RMK, Zenica. All major general managers were also members of the Central Committee and were obliged to obey every decision made by the communists.

This system, helped by foreign credit, worked very well and Bosnia-Herzegovina was developing quickly. Its people enjoyed a better quality of life, while its leaders proved themselves to be competent and successful. Meanwhile, the political leaderships in the other republics were falling out of favour with Tito. During the early 1970s he sacked the majority of leaders in Croatia because of alleged nationalism; in Serbia they were sacked because of alleged liberalism; in Slovenia because of alleged technocracy; and in Macedonia some leaders disappeared from the scene for reasons that were kept out of the public domain. Tito liked to stress the example set by Bosnian leaders.

In addition to the main concern of the politics of the elite, an explanation of social structure is also important for an understanding of Bosnian society. One

should take into account all the differences between the communist societies and the class system in the West. Yugoslavia was again a unique case, although it also displayed many general points common to the East, especially in the early phase of development. The egalitarian nature of the changes in social structure was a main characteristic in the 1950s and 1960s, but they will not be discussed at length here.

By the 1970s and 1980s, however, this feature, was no longer as important as it was in the rest of the communist societies. Frank Parkin rightly portrayed the overall reward structure from a high to a low level as follows:

- qualified white collar employees
- skilled manual workers
- lower white collar employees
- unskilled manual workers.¹³

His division works well when discussing the workforce in enterprises, but one still misses the overall social structure in society. It is necessary, therefore, to take into account his work and the works of other authors, including Djilas, to determine the social structure of society towards the end of the Communist era in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The egalitarian character of the ruling ideology is clearly illustrated by the salaries of the highest officials. The president of the Federal Presidency was paid US \$400 per month in 1987—two and a half times less than his Hungarian counterpart and four times less than the Romanian president.¹⁴ Various rules were applied to salaries in order to satisfy egalitarian communist rules. However, this did not prevent differences within society. They could not be described as huge but, as a policy of equality was constantly proclaimed by the rulers and accepted by most citizens, they became more significant, as the regime's collapse in the late 1980s showed.

After taking into account financial power, education, social prestige and influence, privileges, benefits, personal wealth and living places, one could say that there were six major groups forming society, which could be divided into three classes. However, the division was never clear and one could also find a few more or even a few less elements, depending on the criteria used in research. Some groups are not mentioned specifically but would form part of one of the classes: for example, policemen and army officers would be regarded as mainly in the middle class, while some of the top commanders would be of a higher class. The same criteria applied to doctors and other distinguished groups. Society could, therefore, be divided into classes, although none of the classes was definite, as it was not difficult to cross the borders between them. As Djilas pointed out the only real difference between the new class, consisting of the highest-ranking leaders, and the bourgeoisie in the West, was that the new class was not just recruited from its own ranks.¹⁵ Privileges were not transferable within the family and opportunity was widely open to all classes, although the party

ranks provided the best route to advancement. This was the social structure of society during the early and mid-1980s, taking into account the theoretical works of those authors already mentioned and empirical research conducted by myself:

1. Upper Class

- (a) High ranking politicians and some top managers.
- (b) Managers of successful companies and highest ranking rulers at local levels.

2. Middle Class

- (a) Urban and educated middle class earning a living in towns.
- (b) Entrepreneurs engaged in smaller private businesses, and richer peasants.

3. Lower Class

- (a) Workers living in villages surrounding towns and working in factories.
- (b) Urbanized peasants living in towns and working in factories, and peasants living and working in backward villages.

These classes were not as strongly divided as they were in western societies. Compared to the societies of liberal democracies, the differences hardly existed. It is important, however, to mark them in order to understand the society. There was no absolute equality, as in any society, but the differences were bigger than the ruling elite and contemporary analysts admitted. Different classes existed despite all the rulers' efforts to abandon a class system. After all, they continued to enjoy the benefits of their social position, which contributed more to divisions than an individual's economic strength.

Moves from one class to another were not uncommon and were very often connected with a political career. One could find people with very different backgrounds at the top of society. They could come from an illiterate family in a backward village or an urban, wealthy family. The factor actor which connected people with such different backgrounds, was politics; it made them equal. Thus, those who joined the party ranks and made successful careers within it, proved the thesis of a classless society, though only to themselves. As Djilas put it: 'The [Communist] party makes the class, but the class grows as a result and uses the party as a basis. The class grows stronger, while the party grows weaker.'¹⁶

Society remained divided, but with all the different classes mixed with each other. The system did not allow segregation except for those few at the top, and then only unofficially. Over the years, the problem of a lack of self-recruiting within the new class was solved by increased corruption, which is discussed later. Thus, the main difference to the western bourgeoisie was almost removed.

This was not a rule but, in the case of the Bosnian political elite, was a decisive factor in their fall from power.

At the bottom of the social pyramid were manual workers (lower class, b), often brought to the towns on a wave of industrialization and urbanization during the post-war period. They usually lived with their large families in new suburbs of large blocks of flats or in houses that were quite often constructed without building permits or urban planning. However, the practice was tolerated because housing shortages were partially solved in this way. Members of this class also had secondary, unofficial, employment and worked as plumbers, builders and in other similar jobs during their spare time. These earnings were rarely declared and a black economy developed. Peasants that remained in backward villages, despite all the colonization and urbanization efforts during the post-war period formed another part of the lowest class. Cattle and products from small fields were their only resources for surviving. As they were out of the sight of most of society, the rulers worried less about them than other social groups. Although education was provided for all and was free, many members of the lower class only attended the obligatory primary school.

Slightly further up the hierarchy was another sort of manual unskilled worker, forming a class of peasant-workers (lower class, a). They had similar jobs to the first group but did not move to the towns. They commuted to the towns only to work in factories while their spare time was spent in their own fields, where they earned more money. They worked in factories for other reasons. All the contributions from their salaries entitled them and their families to various free facilities, such as the health service, social security, education, various kinds of credit and similar benefits. Helped by their industrial work the peasant-workers, clearly described as a class by Lockwood, built large houses in villages surrounding the towns.¹⁷ In fact, their personal wealth was very often far greater than those nearing the top of the social pyramid.

A trivial detail might distinguish this class from the middle class. Many houses where the lower class lived often did not have telephone connections. It is an irony that Yugoslavia, as a European developing country, was just above Tanzania (with all the usual problems unique to African countries) with regard to telephone connections. There were only 17.5 telephones to every 100 people in the country.¹⁸ As Bosnia-Herzegovina was always just about the average in Yugoslavia, and as its territory was mainly mountainous, one might suspect that the situation was, at best, the same. The lowest two groups usually lived in houses without telephone connections, although this was not a rule, but as they lived mainly in the suburbs or backward villages where communications were less developed, one could assume a lack of telephone connections. Both these groups experienced hard living conditions although, in historical terms, they were significantly improved under the communists.

Above this class was a smaller group of people (middle class, b) engaged in private businesses. Private business and private ownership were allowed by the system; grudgingly at first, but more freely later on. Their rights to employ other

people were restricted but these restrictions were gradually loosened and, by the mid-1980s, the owners and entrepreneurs were even encouraged to employ more people. By that time it was obvious that unemployment would not be solved by state-owned companies.

This social group included yet another type of 'independent producers', as they were described by communist terminology. These were successful agriculture workers who worked in their privately owned plains and farms. They lived in villages which were well connected, at least in Bosnian terms, with nearby urban centres. However, they were discriminated against by laws imposed just after the Second World War, which restricted private land ownership in Bosnia-Herzegovina to a maximum of 30 hectares of cultivated land, while in other parts of Yugoslavia this restriction was 10 hectares because of the better quality of the land.¹⁹

Members of this class rarely participated in political life, thus making their influence on economic legislation even smaller. The market was restricted and tax and contribution deductions were high but, despite this, the owners of the small companies were mainly the wealthier part of society. Large conglomerates, whose bosses sat not only on the company boards but also in the highest ranked committees, enjoyed a monopolistic position in a market that was based on politics, not economy. The worsened condition of the state-owned economy encouraged more newcomers to start their own businesses, which made this group larger and more influential and underlined the already existing demands for radical economic reform.

A significant portion of this group consisted of repatriates who had returned to their native towns and villages after spending periods earning foreign currency in western Europe. In 1981, there were 133,000 people from Bosnia-Herzegovina working abroad.²⁰ The whole process had started in the 1960s, and many of those who had left them had already returned and started up small businesses in native communities. The capital they invested mainly afforded quick financial accumulation and provided a few new jobs. They at least provided work and financial security for their immediate family and thus solved some of the problems of economic stagnation.

What was left was an urban middle class (middle class, a) made up of highly educated professionals and a large bureaucracy which participated in the decision making process and, meanwhile, had to struggle to survive during the economic crisis from the very beginning of the 1980s. During the periods of huge state investment and public spending this part of society was prosperous. The problems appeared with a decline in the living standard. Foreign debts forced a decrease in public spending. Smaller investments in housing caused great housing shortages, which led to problems especially for the urban middle class because they originated from towns with no, or very loose, connections with the countryside. This was the group from which officials in the ruling bodies were recruited. This lent weight to the class, beside its educational and social background. All surveys show that the majority of the Communist League members were from

this group, thus representing the real basis of rule in the country. As a result, when this group was in trouble, the party and the whole system were also in crisis.

Almost at the very top of society was a class of ruling industrial managers and local rulers at district levels (upper class, b). They were usually educated to university level; they were often the first urban generation of their family and they lived in the better parts of their towns. The personal power of the members of this group was very strong in their particular territory. Numerous examples of districts under their total control could be found in the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Fikret Abdic of Velika Kladusa, who triggered the collapse of the system in Bosnia in 1987, was a typical local ruler, though more successful than others.²¹

POLITICS IN THE 1970s

Despite certain features, the Yugoslav system was still totalitarian. Some authors describe it as 'soft totalitarianism'.²² This was certainly the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where most of the characteristics of the federal state applied more than in the other republics. The second Yugoslavia was characterized by its authoritarian leader, Josip Broz Tito, until his death in 1980. The communist leadership, made up of proven partisan fighters and commanders during the Second World War, committed itself to the assumptions of wartime. This meant a communist ideology that overrode all rules and laws, although most of them were based on this ideology. The state apparatus was made very strong while post-war reconstruction was carried out according to the political environment, in which the mistakes and the ethnic segregation, of political parties in the previous regime were carefully avoided.

Clearly, it was a one-party state and the party put ethnic equality at the centre of its activity in order to avoid any possibility of an emerging basis for nationalist ideology. The basis for nationalist politics would be a lack of prosperity for certain ethnic groups in a multi-ethnic society. The prosperity achieved by all ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina under the communists could be described as a restricted prosperity for all of them. The rule destroyed the boundaries between the state and society and, therefore, all parts of society were heavily politicized. The regime's firm rule did not prepare its own trap by trying to impose a common Bosnian or Herzegovinian nation over the three, clearly distinctive, ethnic groups. Thus, ethnic self-expression was allowed and even encouraged, although very often ethnic organizations were banned. This shows the regime did not see danger in individual ethno-national expression but in organized groups; even ethnic cultural programmes were seen as dangerous.

Meanwhile, all the leaders, while maintaining their own ethnic identity, created a Bosnian political identity at this level by representing all three ethnic groups, regardless of their own ethnicity. This system worked, with its occasional repression of attempted ethnic organizing, and the lack of nationalist

incidents attracted popular approval. Although it is hardly possible to find proof of public attitudes in controlled societies, examples of massive celebrations on holidays and special occasions clearly suggest popular approval for the regime. The state dealt carefully but forcefully with every incident that involved some ethnic basis in its origin.

Relations within the Federation led towards further decentralization during the 1960s. The constitution of 1963 gave even more powers to the republics, and yet another constitutional reform was inaugurated by the early 1970s. Tito, however, remained the cohesive factor, regardless of any kind of constitutional changes. He was certainly above the constitution. Yugoslavia was no longer one society, but a compilation of closely connected societies. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, changes were also inevitable in order to catch up with the other republics. This meant a more closed society and separate plans for development. Thus, policy was changed in this republic but it remained strongly connected with most of the original rules of the communist reign in the country. The system, regardless of the significant changes already mentioned, remained efficiently repressive with the allpervasive organization at the top. A wave of emigration, whether permanent or temporary, as a consequence of the liberal policy in comparison to the rest of the communist world, acted as a further safety valve. At least, the majority of people accepted the system and even took pride in many of its achievements. Tito's cult status made the whole system even stronger.

Besides economic and social aims in building up a just, communist society, nationality policy always remained at the top of the agenda. There was no criticism of brotherhood and unity. Inter-ethnic relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina were a positive example to the whole of Yugoslavia. However, one could question whether this was due to a popular attitude against noncommunist developments or to a more suppressed society. The 'Croatian Spring', as the national movement in Croatia led by communist leaders was later called, was the only development with potential consequences for Bosnia-Herzegovina. As there was no public expression in the republic in support of the Croatian events of 1971, it may be understood that Bosnian Croats did not follow the movement in Zagreb. Some of the participants of the 'Croatian Spring' were originally from Bosnia-Herzegovina, but the fact is that Bosnia and even Herzegovina, with its large Croat population, remained calm although the reasons for this are doubtful.

To understand the public attitude, one has to turn to official statistics. The attitude towards the party among ethnic groups is important. Croats made up 20.6 per cent of the Bosnian population in the early 1970s, but only 11.1 per cent of the party membership.²³ More significantly, in 1961, they had made up 11.9 per cent of the party, which shows a decline. However, no significant incidents were recorded in Bosnia-Herzegovina following the 'Croatian Spring'.²⁴ As the official history of the party claims: The League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina was not, at the time, confronted with significant appearances of nationalism and other opposition developments either within the ranks or in the immediate community.²⁵

After taking into account the above, it is safe to conclude that Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina did not show enthusiasm for the regime in the same way as Moslems and, especially, Serbs, but neither did they actively oppose the regime. Although the number of Croat party members was proportionately low, the Croat nationalist leaders of the 1990s were actually mainly former communists. Thus, even these figures should be regarded with reserve. The other two ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina participated more in the party membership. It was during this period that Moslems were constitutionally recognized as a separate nationality within Yugoslavia and, therefore, the changes in the statistics are not absolutely reliable since some Moslems still declared themselves as either Serbs or Croats, or as 'officially undeclared'. In 1972, they represented 39.5 per cent of the population and 28.3 per cent of the party.²⁶ The Serbs, meanwhile, made up 37.1 per cent of the Bosnian population and 53.5 per cent of the Communist League in Bosnia-Herzegovina, thus confirming a trend of over-representation in the party, inherited from the war.²⁷

The party membership did not mirror the population, but the leadership did. The executive body (which was called different names during different periods, for example, the executive committee, secretariat, presidency) that led communist policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina was usually made up of a dozen or so members from all ethnic groups. Although the official history of the party does not mention their ethnic belonging, it is clear, from their names and some other sources, that ethnic equality was carefully observed at all times. In 1965, there were three Serbs, two Moslems and two Croats in this body, plus one of each was elected as a secretary of the committee.²⁸ In 1967, there were five Moslems, four Serbs and two Croats.²⁹ In 1974, the top positions in the party organization were occupied by three Croats, two Serbs and two Moslems.³⁰ All this shows that an ethnic quota system was not strictly imposed, but the leaders did carefully observe equality, which was represented in the leadership's structure.

Thus, one might argue that the leadership did not reflect the membership of the party, where the Serbs were in a majority. It tended, rather, to reflect society as a whole. As a result, the membership structure during the 1970s and early 1980s changed to reflect the ethnic proportions in society. The participation of the Serbs in the party fell from 54.6 per cent to 42.1 per cent, while they made up 32.02 per cent of the population. The number of Moslems in the party grew from 27.8 per cent to 34.6 per cent, to come closer to their percentage of 39.52 per cent of the Bosnian population. The Croats made up 18.38 per cent of the population in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but still the same percentage of only 11.3 per cent of the communists.³¹ One should note that, despite the unchanged percentage in party membership, the number of Croats had risen to three times their original number, since the whole membership grew significantly from 142,313 to 415,808 during the period between 1970 and 1984.³²

The three Bosnians at the top of the political pyramid belonged to different ethnic groups, which was just another part of a carefully and strategically thought-out nationality policy in the republic. They rotated between all the

highest political posts in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s. It was clear that those three were at least 'a head' above the rest. Arguably, the most influential Bosnian was Branko Mikulic, a Croat from Central Bosnia who became a promising Federal Prime Minister in 1986, after voluntarily leaving a quiet but prestigious post as a member of the collective Federal Presidency. Hamdija Pozderac, a Moslem from western Bosnia, replaced Mikulic in the Federal Presidency with an almost certain view of becoming its president in 1988 unless something unforeseeable happened. Milanko Renovica, a Serb from Mount Romanija near Sarajevo, was delegated to the Federal Presidency of the League of Communists and consequently named as its president for one term.

One should bear in mind that the leaders in this period had different ethnic backgrounds, but were not 'ethnic leaders'—Malcolm wrongly described Mikulic as 'the Bosnian Croat leader'.³³ Cosmopolitanism was one of their main characteristics and they were always the first to criticize the appearance of nationalism in each of their respective ethnic groups. This kind of leadership proves that ethnic policy was imposed from above. Although the nationality policy was very carefully observed and exercised, it was never publicly stated that the next leader of the Central Committee should be of a certain ethnic origin. Potential domination of any ethnic group was prevented by unwritten rules that were always respected. The leadership's main concern had always been ethnic equality and Tito's policy of 'brotherhood and unity'. There is no recorded confrontation between the top leaders on any ethnic issue. The monolithism of the leaders was translated into the unity of the population. This policy was inaugurated in the war when Bosnia-Herzegovina was described by the highest ruling body, ZAVNOBiH, as, '...neither Serbian, nor Croatian, nor Moslem but also Serbian and Croatian and Moslem. It will be a free and brotherly country in which full equality of all Serbs, Moslems and Croats will be guaranteed.'³⁴

On this basis, consecutive communist leaderships in Bosnia-Herzegovina developed a policy of nationalities. As, in turn, it was the basis for all other policies they did not take any chance that the harmony could be disturbed. Occasional efforts by the nationalist émigré groups never managed to disturb the order of things or attract sympathy for their cause either within the country or abroad. The biggest challenge to the whole communist order in Yugoslavia was attempted in 1972, when the most serious paramilitary operation by Croat nationalist émigrés was staged in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In order to understand popular attitudes and how the regime's policy of nationalities functioned, this incident has to be described in more detail.

As a revolt against the rule could not have been expected to arise from within society, some of the most militant émigré organizations made efforts to destabilize the regime. Some terrorist actions were carried out by them, but mainly abroad. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the only serious challenge came in June 1972. A group of Croat terrorists who were born in Yugoslavia, many of them in Bosnia-Herzegovina, came secretly to the mountainous region of western,

central Bosnia. The region was chosen because of its geographic characteristics and also because of its predominantly Croat population. The southern outskirts of these mountains are in western Herzegovina, almost exclusively Croat territory. The terrorists, however, did not get any support from the locals. As the very same territory became a nationalist stronghold in the 1990s, it proves two points which do not exclude each other. One is that the regime was very strong and people were afraid of joining the terrorists. Another is that extreme nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina was only developed later as a consequence of politics in the 1980s.

The regime mobilized units of the Territorial Defence, which consisted of ordinary people drafted into brigades to defend their own region. Others involved in combat with the terrorists were police units and a company of the military police. The terrorists were on the run after the first clash with the armed forces and divided themselves into smaller groups. The whole action lasted until the end of July when the last Croat extremists were caught in Croatia as they tried to escape. All the Croat extremists ended up dead, mainly in combat, and the few survivors were sentenced and executed.³⁵ The only exception was the youngest of them, Ludvig Pavlovic, who was pardoned by Tito himself and was supposed to serve 20 years in prison instead. He served almost a complete sentence. After the HDZ [Croatian Democratic Union] came into power in Croatia in 1990, they negotiated his transfer to a prison in Croatia first, and later set him free. Pavlovic immediately joined the Croat paramilitary and became one of the commanders of Croat forces in Herzegovina. He was killed in 1991 in western Herzegovina while engaging in combat against the JNA [Yugoslav People's Army] in one of the first nationalist clashes in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The ethnic policy of the regime not only survived the 1972 attempt but was also proven to work. This could be concluded after taking a look at the casualties' list. Ten members of the Territorial Defence were killed in action, one policeman, one military policeman and an officer from this unit were also among the casualties. Nine of those killed were Croats, three were Moslems and one was a Serb.³⁶ The ethnic breakdown of the casualties was certainly important in terms of proving the policy of 'brotherhood and unity', since the majority of the defenders of the system and its rule were of the same ethnic origin as the attackers. The regime presented the action as a great success and glorified the people's will to fight terrorists of the same ethnic origin.

The regime and its inter-ethnic policy certainly needed ordinary people to fight the terrorists. A small group of terrorists did not have a chance in a highly controlled society, regardless of how well they had been trained. To send armed civilians as the Territorial Defence, was a decision strictly based on politics. This shows the major characteristic of the regime in Bosnia. Every politician primarily fought nationalism in his own ethnic group. The political leaders most outspoken on this during the action were Croats—Branko Mikulic, head of the communists in Bosnia, and General Franjo Herljevic. This attitude was also

expected of the ordinary people. It proved, over the post-war period, to be a successful policy.

One could hardly find any case of ethnic grievances or incidents. It seems there were very few and they were not reported in the press unless there was a greater danger of rumours, which could, in turn, create a greater reaction to the incidents than they would have originally caused. Even 20 years later, most literature, both in Bosnia-Herzegovina and abroad, avoids this period altogether or sheds very little light on the inter-ethnic relations at this time. One rare source, although heavily biased, is the history of the party which briefly mentions, and thus proves, the existence of some kind of opposition to the political reforms in society and the state of inter-ethnic relations: 'Claims from these positions, in this period, were recorded in Sarajevo, Foca, some places of Eastern Herzegovina, Semberija and Bosanska krajina.'³⁷ Since this is the only available trace—police archives are either destroyed or have not appeared in public yet—one can only assume the alleged claims were not a great danger for the regime. Most of them were made in private and were only verbal expressions of doubts or criticisms about the system, without any organizational attempt to develop an opposition force to the party. The party, nevertheless, took them seriously and put all its efforts into preventing similar appearances, since very few were recorded in the period to follow. This kind of policy of preventing nationalist expression at the very roots was developed during the 1970s and 1980s and eventually made the Bosnian regime more repressive than the others in Yugoslavia.

THE PARTY AND THE POPULATION

Tito was happy with the Bosnian leaders because they showed him how conscious they were of possible ethnic tensions and did not hide their complete loyalty to the concept of 'brotherhood and unity' while great steps in economic development were taking place. The whole population witnessed unprecedented progress; the fast urbanization and industrialization of Bosnia-Herzegovina after the Second World War should be added to the communist success stories. Thus, the economic policy of the leaders was marked as very productive and enjoyed popular support, though it was hard to find any critical opinion of any aspect of life in the republic, because society was totally controlled. Positive public expressions during the ceremonial openings of new factories, roads and schools seem to have been sincere in their character. In the ten years since the defeat of the communists, there were no claims of forced participation in expressing support for this kind of rule.

However, the party also experienced some crises and had some less successful policies. The early 1970s were marked with problems in other parts of Yugoslavia. The 'Road Affair' in Slovenia, the 'Croatian Spring' and 'Serbian Liberalism' all caused turbulence in the governing ranks. Bosnia-Herzegovina was saved from such problems. However, one should notice a decline in the

party membership in the early seventies. In 1972, there were 12.1 per cent (19, 277) fewer communists in Bosnia-Herzegovina than in 1968.³⁸ This shows a general crisis, or at least a kind of inert situation, in the party. Even economic successes had some downturns, especially in the early 1980s. The Bosnian economy, meanwhile, accrued less than US\$2 billion from exports to markets outside Yugoslavia.³⁹ However, any dissatisfaction, not only with the economy, was still very muted in Bosnia. The governing elite could not have been stronger.

The other republics' leaderships were more liberal and 'problems' were appearing there. While the other republics had some problems with their nationality policies, Bosnia-Herzegovina surprised the outside world by showing no particular ethnic problem and even staged the 1984 Winter Olympic Games in Sarajevo. The successful organization of the games brought huge acclaim to the head of the Organizing Committee, Branko Mikulic, who led the organization with a strong hand. Nothing was left unplanned and the official propaganda machine produced great results, even keeping Sarajevo citizens happy when they were banned from driving their cars during the games. The rest of the Yugoslavs, even those living abroad, felt the same as the Sarajevans:

The action of collecting donations for the Olympics in Sarajevo attracted a huge support among our citizens in Sweden. More than 208,000 kronas, i.e., more than 3 million dinars were donated. This action was particularly welcomed in Yugoslav clubs and associations in Sweden.⁴⁰

This was a typical report in the domestic media at the time. The foreign media was less subjective, but found similar trends to distinguish the organization of these games from others:

The lack of disasters in Sarajevo seems positively ominous... When funds were a problem in 1981, Sarajevans voted overwhelmingly to tax themselves an extra 2.5 percent to defray expenses—and about half of the 448,500 citizens contributed more than what was mandatory. The idea, it seems, is to show Marxism in action and make a ton of money—concepts that are not mutually exclusive in a 'nonaligned' nation such as Yugoslavia.⁴¹

All of this was based on massive propaganda campaigns, launched to secure popular support. The Olympic Games were the culmination of a succession of actions that originated public popular support. Earlier, for the purpose of building new roads, the leadership promoted the slogan 'A Thousand Kilometres of New Roads' and the action for the development of the educational system was named '1,000 New Schools'. Voluntary work and financial donations were an obligatory part of these actions. Everything was launched with grandiose opening ceremonies to prove that the path of Tito's socialism was being followed. Local communities were awarded better economic prospects, originating either from

better transport facilities or a rise in local employment, while services, especially education and health, were improved to satisfy most local needs. On a more global scale, Bosnia-Herzegovina was catching up with the more developed republics, although it remained, as a whole, officially underdeveloped. These results were achieved by a regime that had put society under the total control of the party. At the top was an elite that managed to impose its will over society. The size and strength of the elite were never really assessed. After all, it was a people's regime that in essence denied the existence of elites and classes. However, there has been some academic analysis. The Yugoslav sociologist Vladimir Goati comes closest to a determination of the political elite:

...which was made up of about 15,000 people in Yugoslavia, which enjoy complete power in concentric circles. They were elected and named by themselves after regulating this through 'public agreements on personnel policy'.⁴²

Taking into account the size and population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, one can determine that up to 2,000 people were making up the elite in the republic. This elite had complete control over life. The few dissidents who tried to raise their voices against the system were quickly silenced and there were no signs of dissent, or civil society at all (see [Chapter 3](#)), in Bosnia-Herzegovina until the late 1980s. The whole system of governing in the republic, as throughout Yugoslavia, was designed to show a possible plurality of ideas but, at the same time, it prevented any move away from the determined path towards a 'just socialist society', as conceived by leading individuals. Five political organizations had the whole of society under their control. Some other organizations were allowed, but only in so far as they did not interfere with official political ideas.

All political organizations were led by the communists. The League of Communists, SK [Savez komunista], was decisive and actually led the other four. At the top of this organization was the Central Committee with its Presidency, which was the executive body for the whole organization. The second most important organization was the Socialist Alliance of Working People, SSRN [Socijalistički savez radnog naroda], which was supposed to be an umbrella organization for all movements and to give the image of an open society. The third organization was the Council of Workers Unions organized by the authorities. Their activities show that the unions were more concerned with implementing party policy than with workers' rights. When industrial actions and strikes took place, officials from the unions usually did not act on the workers' behalf but on behalf of the regime. This policy was even criticized by some communist leaders, as the case of the four old revolutionaries expelled from the party in the early 1970s proves. The fourth organization, whose influence and membership was declining, was the Alliance of the Associations of the Fighters of the Peoples' Liberation War, SUBNOR [Savez udruženja boraca narodno-

oslobodilackog rata]. The organization secured respect, and some influence was still commanded by its members. The youngest organization was the Alliance of the Socialist Youth, SSO [Savez socijalističke omladine]. Their role in the late 1980s was very important in democratizing society in Bosnia-Herzegovina and is analysed later.

Influence and rule over society was achieved through a network of branches of all organizations in every single community. In addition there was a 'system of delegates' consisting of numerous assemblies at all levels. This complicated pattern of rule enabled large parts of the population to participate in decision-making processes, though in practice it was more formal than practical.

Only the dissidents, though very few, had a critical attitude, but they did not have a chance to voice their opinions. While some forms of dissent were tolerated to a certain extent in Belgrade and Zagreb, the Sarajevo regime did not take any chances. In more ethnically homogeneous societies some forms of nationalism are not as dangerous for regimes as in multi-ethnic countries. This could explain the different policy towards nationalist dissent in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the one side and that of the other republics on the other. Nationalism was clearly an enemy. As the system was often described as a 'continuous struggle against external and internal enemies' occasional proof of the struggle was needed. Hence, enemies were invented if there were no real ones. The public had to see the strength and decisiveness of the regime and its policy. This was a virtue of governing in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1970s and 1980s.

There were only a few examples of judicial imprisonment and prosecution but, unofficially, the critics lost any chance to repeat their accusations. Many journalists, academics, economists and other professionals were forced to change their place of residence for these reasons. The example of 144 well-known intellectuals who were forced to leave Sarajevo and Bosnia for political reasons, illustrates the style of governing during the strong communist rule.⁴³ Although it is debatable whether these 144 were really 'stimulated' to leave and whether their number is correct, the fact remains that some intellectuals with different political opinions found it easier to live in other Yugoslav centres. Bosnian policy was not liberal enough to accommodate any significantly different ideas from those originating at the top.

As in other non-democratic and highly controlled societies, the regime invented show-trials against those who showed signs of dissent. However, the trials were aimed more at being a preventative for the rest of society than at the accused. This strategy was used by the Bosnian leadership, especially after Tito's death. Nationalism was always the arch-enemy of the regime in Bosnia-Herzegovina, according to its ideologists, and therefore all the show trials were against those who allegedly had committed nationalist offences. The best known example of this kind is the trial of a group of alleged Islamic fundamentalists. This group, led by Alija Izetbegovic, was put on trial in Sarajevo in 1983. Support for them came from independent intellectual circles in Belgrade, including many

Serbian nationalists, while Sarajevo kept quiet. This proves that, at the time, there was a more liberal regime in Belgrade, although only in comparison to Sarajevo.

Izetbegovic's trial was typical of the Sarajevo regime and should be described in more detail. Alija Izetbegovic, who was to become a Moslem leader much later, wrote a controversial book entitled *The Islamic Declaration* in 1970, but was not put on trial then. The reasons for this remain unknown. He was absolutely insignificant in Bosnian life and presented no danger to the system. The limits of his possible influence did not extend beyond the boundaries of his favourite mosque in Sarajevo. At the time, even the Islamic circles did not know who was the leader of those later put on trial.⁴⁴ In 1983, however, the regime felt the necessity of this show trial and Izetbegovic was accused with a group of other devout Moslems. Six of them, including Izetbegovic, were accused of 'forming a hostile organization with the aim of overthrowing the constitutional order of the state', while the others were accused of 'hostile propaganda'. It seems that the regime felt the need for a show of strength during the period of deep economic crisis shortly after Tito's death, when the outside world kept predicting inter-ethnic problems in Yugoslavia, and especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The trial also took place immediately prior to the Olympic Games.

Sixty out of a few hundred people summoned to the secret police's offices to investigate the case were chosen to sign the statements against the accused. Those charged were denied solicitors until the end of the investigation. During the trial, only 15 of the witnesses confirmed their original statements. One person who did not confirm the original statement was later forced to appear again and contradict himself. The Federal Court changed the classification of the alleged crimes and the group was sentenced for 'hostile propaganda' on the basis of the notorious Article 133 of the criminal code. Izetbegovic spent the period until the end of 1988 in prison. The accusations were contradictory and one man was accused of advocating both the Islamic *sharia* law and western democracy.⁴⁵ The motives for this trial were never uncovered and were the subject of various speculations. The human rights group that studied the case later stated:

The motives for the trial could not be determined clearly. However, one could say with a lot of certainty that the motives were of a common nature [at the time]: keeping up the pressure in the society, persecution of non-sympathizers, all in the function of a struggle for power and keeping the present order.⁴⁶

One should mention that some other trials took place around the same time. Vojislav Seselj, later a notorious Serb nationalist, was prosecuted and sentenced to eight years in prison in 1984. He was 'guilty' because of 'counter-revolutionary activities'. The basis for conviction was found by the secret police in Seselj's unpublished manuscript discovered in his desk. This was an old communist tactic of reciprocity. They needed another trial of an offender of

some other ethnicity after Izetbegovic's group was sentenced. Seselj, a young Sarajevo academic, was probably chosen because he had offended the highest officials.⁴⁷ He served two years of his prison sentence. After his imprisonment he left Bosnia-Herzegovina for Belgrade and became, indeed, a notorious nationalist. These two examples were typical communist-sponsored trials to secure power. They were often described as the final solution in a struggle against 'nationalism of all colours'.⁴⁸

An even better example of the regime's functioning was the persecution of a group of alleged Serb nationalists. The 'Seselj Trial' was obviously not a well-prepared case. The regime needed something more. Nationalists were discovered in the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza.⁴⁹ They were prosecuted during 1986. It is easy to see that this police action was a side effect of the process against Izetbegovic and his group. One of the accused, an Orthodox priest named Vlado Elez, described the events: 'I was summoned by the secret police more than fifty times. An inspector threatened me he would force me to spit on the Bible as they have forced Moslems earlier to spit on the Koran.'⁵⁰ It was a very similar scenario to the case against the alleged Moslem fundamentalists. Ironically, one of the persecuted was not even a Serb but a Croat. They were all suspects because of their conversations in restaurants, which were reported by some informers to the secret police. The political elite, which absolutely controlled life in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1970s and 1980s, proved to be secure in power with this kind of regime. These show trials certainly sent clear signals to all potential dissidents. While occasional disturbances occurred in the other republics, Bosnia-Herzegovina remained calm.

All these examples show the regime's major concern with nationalism. But there were not enough cases to prove widespread activities of nationalists, nor were there signs of a potential rise in minor nationalist incidents. One could notice two kinds of danger for the elite. One, however weak, was coming from those outside the party. They were usually described as nationalists and the regime dealt with them through the courts. The other kind of dissent could be found within the party ranks. The elite's reaction to these challenges involved the political isolation of the perpetrators and their expulsion from public life. While this policy secured the stability of the regime it also produced enemies, even when there was no such intention.

The case of four old revolutionaries, consequently expelled from the party ranks, is the most notorious example of the readiness of the regime to do anything to secure absolute power and control. After the security forces dealt successfully with Croat terrorists in 1972, the only recorded criticism came from Cedo Kapor, a declared National Hero for his role in the partisan movement and fighter in the Spanish Civil War. He blasted the way the operation to catch Croat extremists had been conducted: 'It hurts me to see that the whole republic was mobilised to catch twenty people. As if they had ten tanks and twenty aeroplanes each... I think we could have done it with less parade and at a lesser cost.'⁵¹ Kapor was expelled from the party and never got a chance to repeat his views or

express any kind of opinions until this particular rule collapsed in the late 1980s. At the same time, three other revolutionaries suffered the same punishment for a more general criticism. On 7 September 1972, at the meeting of the republican leadership delegation with members of the Council of Federation from Bosnia-Herzegovina, all retired former senior leaders, the veterans described the situation as they saw it. Osman Karabegovic, a party member since 1932, a former partisan and a high-ranking politician, criticized the situation in the republic, describing self-management as stagnating while the highest ranking individuals controlled public life completely.⁵² The lack of proper democracy was a problem according to Karabegovic who, while talking to the leaders, claimed that, 'not a single one of you would have been elected if there had been democratic elections'.⁵³

As ethnic relations were always at the core of communist policy, every critic, although very rare, made some claims about an emerging nationalism that was not prevented or fought effectively. This was proved in a discussion of another legendary partisan and communist, Avdo Humo who described the problems as follows:

We live in a permanent crisis in the whole of Yugoslavia. We are moving towards a confederation that could completely destroy the self-management. Nationalism is knocking on our doors and we are talking about it on propaganda level. None of the problems have been solved. Every day the situation is deteriorating.⁵⁴

A third revolutionary, Hajro Kapetanovic, joined in with the criticism but the leadership was of the opposite opinion. This showed a clash between the different generations of leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The older were critically-minded and suspicious of a transformation towards a more closed society, while the younger saw the only way to reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina as lying in this direction. There was no chance of dividing the party into factions that would struggle for power, which in fact only proved the critics' claims regarding the absolute power in the hands of the elite.

The membership was actually warned because all critics were quickly expelled from the party ranks and if this happened to old revolutionaries then it could happen to anybody. The way the expulsions were conducted shows the real nature of the regime and how it functioned. Branko Mikulic presented the problems to the Central Committee and all 90 members who participated in the discussion expressed the leadership's views and voted for the expulsions from the party. All party organizations in the republic had to support the decision. The process ended in 1974 with the total isolation of all four from public life. These events cemented the power in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the hands of the rulers who took complete charge and brought an imaginary long-term stability to the republic until the collapse of such a policy in the late 1980s. In the other republics, the leaders were more liberal. Hence during the following decade and

a half, Bosnian society was the most heavily controlled of all the Yugoslav republics. One might describe it as a harder version of the soft totalitarianism.

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The End of Strong Rule

BROADER ORIGINS OF PROBLEMS

Europe's economic and social systems went through a significant period of change during the late 1970s and 1980s. The economic crisis had forced the systems to accommodate the changed conditions and large manufacturers therefore became increasingly exposed to the economic downturn. In the West, economies were restructured with a greater role for smaller and medium enterprises. The cost came in terms of higher unemployment and in the restriction of some of the social services. The communist world found it much harder to adapt. While the policy of capitalist governments was not to intervene and prevent the rise of a poverty gap, thus giving the markets even more liberal conditions, the communist economies found it much harder and never actually recovered. As Mark Mazower argues, The economy was run according to the Plan, not the market, in conditions of information scarcity and total political responsibility for economic performance.¹

It was the economy, in addition to political and human rights issues, that contributed the most to the collapse of the communist societies in Europe in the late 1980s. Yugoslavia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina within it, although an exceptional case in the communist world, suffered the same problems. In the Yugoslav case, foreign debts were a far more visible problem than in other communist economies, with the exception of Poland. There were economic reasons for borrowing but, as always in the East, political motives were behind them. As Mark Mazower found: 'Communist elites saw Western capital as a means of buying off public opinion and delaying the harsh impact of structural change in the economy. Communists and bankers fell into each other's arms.'²

Yugoslav debts throughout the 1980s were around US\$20 billion; Bosnia-Herzegovina's share was 11.2 per cent. A few more percents should be added to this because the Federation's participation, which included all six republics and two autonomous regions, was 24.7 per cent in 1986.³ After a period of shortages in the early 1980s and a restricted imports policy, in 1986 Yugoslav debts fell to US \$18.3 billion, which was 37 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). The whole country achieved US\$13 billion from its exports in 1986, but 46.48

per cent went on repaying foreign debts. The debts due to be repaid totalled US \$4.18 billion in 1986, while the interest charges in the same year amounted to US \$1.87 billion.⁴ The state managed to repay some of the debts but the standard of living was sacrificed and some voices were raised against the system. This was the case in some of the larger centres, such as Ljubljana, Belgrade and Zagreb, but not in Sarajevo. Still, these criticisms could only be marked as a sign of future dissent and initiatives for change because, at the time, the system seemed, still, despite all its weaknesses, to be strong.

Unlike the rest of the communist societies, Yugoslavia also suffered from a typical 'western illness'—unemployment. The unemployment rate in Yugoslavia was rising constantly while prices increased even faster, thus producing poverty. The index of poverty that gives a clearer picture of the state of society can be determined by using Lawrence Klein's method. This Nobel Prize winner added the unemployment rate to the rise of prices. The calculations showed that the poverty index in the developed countries was usually in the range of 10 to 15 (combining a single-figure inflation rate and a single-figure percentage of unemployment), while in Yugoslavia in 1988, it was over 200. The unemployment rate was 14.4 per cent while the rise in prices was 270 per cent. However, two newspapers using this method published different figures, although both were well over 200.⁵ A wider spread of poverty in society was prevented by non-declared earnings and strong family ties; a kind of family solidarity. The living standard of those employed, however, suffered further for these reasons. The following example shows how changes on a global level reflected on the lives of ordinary citizens: 'Between 1983 and 1987, the value of dinar became 22 times smaller than its original value while the prices went up 17 times in comparison of the original value; i.e., 2,200 per cent and 1,700 per cent respectively.'⁶

These were the reasons for the increasing industrial unrest. Some 63,000 employees participated in 239 strike actions throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina during 1988. There were almost 9,000 more participants than during the previous year.⁷ An additional problem in this republic was the shortage of housing, which was more pronounced in Sarajevo (where there was a demand for 17,044 flats) than, for example, in towns of a similar size, such as Skopje (13,781) and Ljubljana (9,625).⁸ All of this shows the seriousness of the problems that the Sarajevo elite had been facing. However, the indexes of industrial production clearly show the economic success in Bosnia under the rule of Mikulic and the others. If the year 1955 was taken as a basis and marked with the index 100, in 1972 it would show the index in Bosnia at 437 points, while for the whole of Yugoslavia it would be at 495 points. That was the year when Mikulic, Pozderac, Renovica and others installed themselves at the top of the political pyramid in Bosnia. Towards the end of their rule, the index for the whole of Yugoslavia was 1007, while Bosnia was above average with the index showing at 1026.⁹ Yet, the whole of Yugoslavia was in economic crisis, as was the whole of eastern Europe; indexes of industrial production might have been good enough

for some committee meetings or statistics, but for the population poverty was still a problem.

The economic crisis initially started in the 1970s, as in most of Europe, but deepened after Tito's death and was a big burden for Yugoslav leaders. In May 1986, a consensus was achieved and it was Mikulic who had a chance to lead the new Federal Government and the Federation out of crisis. His policy was commonly known as 'programmed inflation'. Its main characteristic was the reduction of interest rates with the aim of combating inflation. However, it did not prevent prices from still going up. While targeting macro-economic variables like interest rates, wages and exchange rates, the government lost its battle with inflation. Exports were falling and production was stagnating as the inflation rate was rising. The wage freeze introduced by the government was abandoned, probably as a result of the government's fear of social unrest. Despite a relative weakness regarding wages, the government exercised a very persistent policy for two years.

In May 1988, the government initiated a new economic approach. The main characteristic was partial liberalization as a consequence of the agreement with the International Monetary Fund. Many prices and imports were liberalized and a foreign exchange market was introduced. The expected inflation rate was related to the rate of changes in wages, public expenditure and money supply. However, the government was not successful in achieving the expected inflation rate although the wages remained under control for most of the period. This policy caused the widespread unpopularity of Mikulic and his government. He was the first communist prime minister to face a vote of no confidence in the Federal Parliament after delegates from Slovenia and Croatia stated their demands. The result was 64 for Mikulic's government and 23 against it. As the vote was in the Chamber of Republics and Provinces the result was, in fact, six to two and the government survived.

Mikulic and his team tried to introduce some new economic measures at the Federal Parliament session of 15 May 1988. One of the reasons for the criticism of the government was a 'stand-by' arrangement with the International Monetary Fund. Although the deputies claimed the deal was not in the best interests of the country's economy, the arrangement was not changed. One could easily assume that the Federal Government was actually powerless when negotiating the terms with the International Monetary Fund.

Public spending was restricted in order to bring down the inflation rate to 133 per cent. The rise in salaries was also restricted, to 119 per cent. The net domestic assets of the banks were restricted to a 125.5 per cent rise. The net domestic assets of the National Bank of Yugoslavia were restricted even more, to a maximum rise of 115 per cent. Restrictions on public spending were accompanied by liberalization: 60 per cent of prices and 40 per cent of imports were exempted from quantitative restrictions.¹⁰ Foreign debts at that time amounted to US\$19.1 billion. The dinar was devalued a fortnight later by a further 23.9 per cent.¹¹ The official devaluation did not change a lot because its

TABLE 1

OFFICIAL RATES OF EXCHANGE, 1988

	<i>1 January</i>	<i>27 May</i>	<i>3 June</i>	<i>10 June</i>	<i>17 June</i>
DM100	78,849.00	91,152.45	117,796.97	118,253.57	122,576.07
£1.00	2,333.53	2,894.09	3,675.14	3,700.71	3,836.31
\$1.00	1,246.22	1,551.86	2,033.29	2,032.58	2,149.42
	dinars	dinars	dinars	dinars	dinars

Source: Oslobođenje, 1998.

value was constantly falling. Immediately it meant that already heavily restricted spending was even more limited, in real terms, because the restrictions were imposed regardless of the dinar's value.

The government's policy brought workers to Belgrade. During June and July 1988, there were constant protests before parliament and the government's offices. They all wanted higher salaries because it was very hard to survive with restricted salaries and a high inflation rate. However, some were helped by savings in foreign currencies, but only those who kept them out of banks. Those who had foreign currency bank accounts could only get the value in dinars. The official dinar's value was always 10 to 20 per cent higher than on the black market, which was the only place to buy foreign currency. Table 1 shows the official rate changes and the dramatic fall of the dinar's value in less than six months.¹²

Part of the population was earning its living on the black market. Nondeclared earnings from second jobs were more significant sources of survival for workers than their regular salaries. As one critique in the local newspaper pointed out: 'It cannot be claimed that the salaries stimulate spending without control because they make only 40 per cent of the whole of population's earnings.'¹³

The unions claimed that salaries made up only 48 per cent of the whole of the population's earnings.¹⁴ Whatever the correct figure, it is clear that salaries accounted for a little less than half of the population's earnings. Black market earnings explain how very low-paid workers survived the terrible economic conditions. The whole summer of 1988 was very tense for the government. The Federal Union's Council declared that there were 5.7 per cent more strikes during the first half of 1988 than in the same period a year earlier. What was more significant was the number of participants in the strikes, which had risen by 48.8 per cent to 150,000.¹⁵ The trend continued at the same pace towards the end of the year. It was claimed that: This year of 1988, brought 1,348 strike actions that is 15.2 per cent more than last year's 1,127. During the last year, work was interrupted by 233,886 workers while 314,000 workers did the same during this year.'¹⁶

Prices went up by 10 to 20 per cent every month during the last quarter of the year. Under such circumstances, the annual inflation rate was rightly predicted to be in the range of 200 to 700 per cent.¹⁷ Finally, at the end of the year, Branko Mikulic resigned. He was the first communist prime minister in Yugoslavia to take such a step.

At the beginning of 1989 the ruling system was in chaos. The Federal Assembly did not pass the necessary laws and even the budget was not agreed between the republics' representatives. Complaints from the federal army were ever louder because their financing played a major part in the budget. Temporary financing enabled the army to survive financially by giving them 5.04 per cent of the GDP.¹⁸ Numbers in the armed forces were reduced by 13 per cent. Even so, 72 per cent of the federal budget was spent on the army.¹⁹

The government's resignation seems to have surprised the domestic public even more than foreign correspondents. Their reports can be summarized in this sentence from the report of the Czechoslovakian Telegraph Agency: 'It is rather a wonder that the government survived for so long in the country with the inflation rate of almost 250 percent.'²⁰ Despite some demands for his resignation, Mikulic had claimed only a month earlier that he was not even thinking about resignation.²¹ However, the reasons for the resignation were evident. The Yugoslav dinar had lost 270 per cent of its value compared to the German mark, while comparisons with the British pound and the American dollar were even worse at 301 per cent and 319 per cent respectively.²² Exports were relatively high at US\$11.7 billion but, at the same time, foreign debts went up and were among the world's top ten.²³ The scale of the debt was disputed: the World Bank claimed it was US\$22 billion, while the International Monetary Fund put it at US\$18.8 billion. The Yugoslav government denied both figures and claimed the debts were exactly US\$19.8 billion.²⁴

Political problems should be added to the economic ones. Besides the inevitable restructuring of the economy, political changes were initiated. However, the Federation was not uniform in its approach to the direction of constitutional changes. The ideas of civil society, coming mainly from the Slovene youth organization, were gaining increasing support from their seniors. As a symbolic gesture towards changes and to signal the adoption of a more realistic attitude, the traditional celebration of the late Tito's birthday was abandoned in 1988, after demands from Slovenia.²⁵ Further political problems were caused by the Slovene press, who attacked the federal defence minister for his role in selling arms to dictatorial countries in Africa and Asia.²⁶

These were not the only events of importance for the system and for the unity of the Federation. Slobodan Milosevic rose to power in Serbia on a wave of popular nationalist feelings against Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo. It can be argued that a popular dissatisfaction with the economy was transformed into a hatred of other ethnic members of society. It was ironic that economic stagnation and decline produced even more support for the leadership in Serbia. According to the popular leaders in Serbia, the leaders in the other republics and

provinces were to be blamed for all problems. At the time, academics, writers and other Serbian intellectuals in the Academy of Science and Arts prepared a paper on the political situation in Yugoslavia. This work was quoted throughout the crisis as the ideological basis of Serbian nationalism. Their description of the problems easily attracted attention:

General and profound crisis has spread in not only the political and economic system but in the whole public order of the state. Everyday appearances include: lack of work and responsibility at the workplace, corruption and nepotism, lack of law security, bureaucratic obstinacy, disrespect of laws, growing lack of confidence among the people and ever more inconsiderate individual and group's egoism... An objective consideration of the Yugoslav present allows possibility of the crisis ending in social earthquakes. The consequences could not exclude even a catastrophic ending like the dissolution of the Yugoslav state community.²⁷

These economic and political conditions, although described by Serbian nationalists, gave grounds for quiet dissent in all of Yugoslavia. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, it was during this period that the Agrokomerc scandal went public and triggered the most important stream of events during the communist reign. A few authors, notably David Dyker, found this scandal to be a synonym for the whole system. 'But the specific forms of corruption which came to the fore in Yugoslavia...represented what was, perhaps, a unique blend of degenerate communism and traditional local...politics.'²⁸

THE AGROKOMERC SCANDAL

In January 1987, a fire in one of the Agrokomerc factories, an agricultural enterprise in Velika Kladusa, western Bosnia, attracted police inspectors to investigate the case.²⁹ The reaction of the company managers, who had not been cooperative at all during the regular investigation of the causes of the fire, aroused suspicion within the police. For a long time the local police controlled the affairs in Velika Kladusa and Fikret Abdic, the local lord and Agrokomerc's general manager, influenced local affairs. Therefore, the Sarajevo-based Ministry of Internal Affairs [Sekretarijat unutrašnjih poslova] ordered a further, detailed investigation; this time not only into the cause of the fire in Velika Kladusa but into all of Agrokomerc's businesses. The information about the findings was handed over to the Republic's Presidency on 6 April 1987.³⁰

Meanwhile, an inspector of the National Bank in Sarajevo, Mustafa Brkic, undertook his own investigation into the financial affairs of Agrokomerc and handed over the report to Jure Pelivan, the Governor of the National Bank, on 24 April 1987. Both sets of information, however, were kept secret and were sent to only a few very confidential addresses at a federal level. The public was not informed at all. Both reports showed that major financial crimes had been

committed regularly by the Agrokomerc management since the beginning of 1984. It was reported that 'Agrokomerc issued 17,681 promissory notes worth 1, 214,936,000,000 Yugoslav dinars during the period between 1984 and September 1985. There were no debtor-creditor relations for this operation. 5,079 promissory notes worth altogether 302,914,000,000 dinars could not be refunded.'³¹

This was the beginning of a practice that brought huge amounts of capital to Agrokomerc and Velika Kladusa. It was used for financing Agrokomerc's business activities, its building infrastructure in Velika Kladusa and nearby Cazin and other projects, all without financial cover.³² The promissory notes had been issued to the Yugoslav banks, which were provided with an opportunity for earnings in a period when investments were forbidden by the Federal Government. They all accepted Agrokomerc's promissory notes because of the high interest they were charging, which effectively meant large profits for the banks. There were 63 banks to which Agrokomerc owed money.³³ The sum of the unlawfully earned money can be easily illustrated without numbers. The profit of the entire Bosnian economy for two and half years was roughly equal to the money Agrokomerc owed when the scandal was discovered.³⁴

Fikret Abdic had just been elected to the Federal Assembly and named as a member of the Central Committee of the League of Communists. His position was even stronger because of his relations with Hamdija Pozderac of the Federal Presidency, Pozderac's brother and many others from the top ranks of the party and the republic's leadership. At a local level in Velika Kladusa, Abdic built a 'small kingdom' over which he had absolute power. He even staged a military parade of local territorial defence units that marched through the town and saluted him as the supreme commander, an unprecedented event in Yugoslavia. Not a single decision could be made without his approval. However, the local people did not fear him: they respected and really adored him, at least the overwhelming majority of them did. In the following years these people proved their hard-line support for their leader. Abdic kept changing his political parties, but the overwhelming winner at local elections was always the party to which he belonged. The reasons for this can be found in Abdic's work.

Velika Kladusa was one of the most underdeveloped regions in Bosnia. The town only received electricity as late as 1956.³⁵ The local population had their own historical traditions—local rulers never obeyed official governors. This was the case during Turkish rule and also during the Second World War and immediately after it. The first rebellion against the communist agricultural policy was staged there. The armed police forces had to suppress the rebellion in the late 1940s. There was literally no industry to employ locals and the land was not rich. Agrokomerc was functioning during the 1950s and 1960s more like the *kolkhoz* (collective farm) in the Soviet Union than like a modern agricultural company. In 1963 it employed only about 30 workers.

The real change came with Fikret Abdic, who initiated local development. In 1987, the company employed 13,500 people and, during the first seven months

of the year, earned US\$44 million from exports,³⁶ which represented 75 per cent of all agricultural exports from Bosnia.³⁷ The entire Bosnian economy earned US \$742 million from exports, which was 0.6 per cent less than a year earlier.³⁸ All this was achieved during a period of rapid inflation, which crossed the 100 per cent mark (100.6) in June 1987 for the first time.³⁹ Thus, Agrokomerc looked, on the surface, to have achieved great results. The problem, however, appeared after the discovery of financial misconduct and huge losses of about US\$200 million.⁴⁰

It should be noted that what Agrokomerc had done was not an uncommon practice in the Yugoslav economy, but previously nobody had ever dared to go so far. Firm political control and the lack of a market economy over the years produced this practice, which was common in all communist systems. The problem for Yugoslavia, and especially for Agrokomerc, was that this became public knowledge. It may be considered the result of a more liberal communism and a less strictly planned economy. If one adds the growing dissatisfaction with rising poverty in society and the threat to a popular living standard in the 1980s, to what has already been mentioned, the result of the discovery was a huge scandal. Agrokomerc was clearly an example of the mixture of a global economic crisis and all its manifestations, as discussed earlier, and local political influence over economic developments as displayed in Yugoslav socialism.

While initially political stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina remained unchallenged, Agrokomerc showed the vulnerability of an economy led by the republic's elite. Although it was not a unique case in Yugoslav terms, Agrokomerc substantiated criticism of those at the top of the Bosnian society. There were two kinds of criticism. One was popular, coming from within Bosnia-Herzegovina and caused by the economic problems the population were experiencing. It was expressed through workers' protests and strike actions. The other was from political circles in the other republics. It was manifested through media coverage of the scandal and lack of political support for troubled Bosnian leaders at a federal level. Due to circumstantial reasons such as earned credits and respect in the past, Bosnian leaders occupied many high posts in the Federation, including Mikulic as the head of government. There was certainly resentment in the other republics of the hardline and 'pure' Bosnian elite, who remained untouched during the period when other leaderships suffered.

In 1985 the Yugoslav economy lost 149 billion dinars in 131,014 cases of financial misconduct.⁴¹ Political leaderships were always solving problems by ordering someone to help out or by giving money from the budget to cover deficits. In this case, it was not easy to cover up because of the scale of the debts, and the leadership in Sarajevo was divided for the first time. Some local authors view this division along ethnic lines, but if one carefully counts all those who lost their posts through the scandal one can see that there are members from all three ethnic groups. Rather, some of the leaders did not want to be involved in covering up financial misconduct on such a large scale. The others were involved to some extent with Agrokomerc and it was in their interests to save the company

and the region. They were the ones who had taken some of the credit for its growth in the past. This is the line along which the leadership was divided. Abdic's protectors in Sarajevo did not want to lose him because they had also taken the credit for his success, and were partly responsible for his growing power in the region. As one Croatian academic described the policy:

...In every republic's and autonomous region's leadership, certain individuals were in charge of certain regions. If that man is from the region he will become an informal lord of his feud through the dominant influence on the personnel policy primarily and through a hundred other ways.⁴²

Abdic emerged from the local hierarchy, while the Pozderac brothers were men from the highest level of leadership. Hamdija Pozderac was one of the top three Bosnian politicians. The others close to the Pozderac brothers exercised the same policy. Their efforts to protect Abdic in this case cost them their entire careers. The scandal was never about personal wealth, as there were no signs that Pozderac or any other patron in Sarajevo had personal financial interests in Agrokomerc, it was about the exercising of political influence and the protection of clients.

The first information to reach the public that something was wrong with Agrokomerc came from a statement by the republic's government on 11 August 1987, which alerted journalists. The Bosnian media was certainly quiet, but the Belgrade-based daily, *Borba* started a serious investigation into the misconduct in Agrokomerc. Bosnian official and semi-official circles tried to argue later, in the early 1990s, that the whole scandal had been initiated by Belgrade, pointing out that the newspaper *Borba*, which discovered most of the scandal, was based there, and claiming that it was Slobodan Milosevic's way of undermining the leadership in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The timetable of events tells a completely different story. Fikret Abdic was sacked from the ranks of the Central Committee of Bosnia-Herzegovina at a meeting that took place on 19 September 1987; the notorious eighth session of the Serbian Central Committee happened four days later. It was not until that session that Milosevic took complete control of events in Serbia. At that time, therefore, he was likely to have been preoccupied with affairs in his own republic and would not have had the time or power to influence events outside his territory. He was not even sure of the results of the session in Belgrade, during which he got rid of some of his rivals.⁴³ Regarding *Borba's* role in the whole affair, it should be borne in mind that it was this newspaper that resisted longest of all Milosevic's attempts to take control of the media in Serbia and it only fell into his hands much later.

The ethnic background of the scandal should be analysed. There were some attempts in Moslem circles in Sarajevo to use the scandal to raise ethnic issues. The argument was that the 'Agrokomerc Case' was a way of weakening Moslem ethnicity, because most of those who had fallen during the scandal were

Moslems.⁴⁴ Local imams in western Bosnia made similar statements at meetings with Moslem followers but were quickly silenced. At least there was no more information about their propaganda in Abdic's favour.⁴⁵ The importance of inter-ethnic relations for this case was discussed by the Central Committee in Sarajevo. The federal Prime Minister, Branko Mikulic, said:

There is a counting of how many Moslems are found responsible, how many Croats and now, when a Serb is in question, some doubts are appearing. If we allowed a disturbance of brotherly relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, then we would fail and destroy everything.⁴⁶

These two examples show the importance of nationality policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The leadership in Sarajevo was certainly well aware of all the dangers for the system if breaks along ethnic lines appeared among them. It was only the beginning of the serious challenges to their rule and they were quick to dismiss any ethnic difference. Preservation of the stability of inter-ethnic relations is the primary argument in defence of a system of strong rule and monolithic leadership. In such a system, breaks within the leadership have broader consequences within society. At the beginning of the scandal the elite was still unified and able to prevent any breaks along ethnic lines. They were especially cautious of public knowledge about probable ethnic breaks. When any ethnic differences became public knowledge, it was a clear sign of the collapse of the system. Although it was true that more Moslems were sacked at the beginning of the scandal, and at a local level, it was very hard to prove that the scandal was directed against the Moslems. The region in which Agrokomerc operated had a predominantly Moslem population.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, at the highest level of politics, the most serious consequences were not exclusive to Moslem politicians. Almost all high-ranking politicians, with very few exceptions, were replaced within a year of the start of the scandal in Velika Kladusa.

At its 48th session, the Presidency of the Central Committee of Bosnia-Herzegovina discussed responsibility for the scandal but did not take any significant steps. However, the scandal was too big to be put aside. The meeting of the 'wider presidency', which included those who were holding the highest posts both in Sarajevo and Belgrade, resulted in a recommendation to the Central Committee to sack Fikret Abdic from its ranks and to recall him from the Federal Parliament. The same meeting, 31 August 1987, also recommended the dismissal of the Agrokomerc leadership and that the republic's Attorney Office, the republic's Department of Public Auditing [SDK], the National Bank of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the bank PBS [Privredna Banka Sarajevo] should be held responsible.

A day later, a similar body at federal level demanded the sacking of all those responsible for the scandal. In Sarajevo, the republic's Conference of the Socialist Alliance launched a complicated initiative for Abdic's recall from the Federal Assembly. The following day the Federal Presidency announced that the

scandal had greatly damaged the whole of society. The Workers' Council in Agrokomerc sacked Abdic on the same day and the Bosnia-Herzegovina government announced that it would not guarantee the debts. Abdic was arrested on 8 September 1987 after he lost his immunity as a delegate in the Federal Assembly. Hamdija Pozderac resigned from the Federal Presidency on 12 September 1987. The other top leaders waited to see whether their names would also be announced as those responsible. Abdic was expelled from the Communist League on 19 September 1987; three days later the Republic's Assembly accepted Pozderac's resignation. On that day the liquidation of the Bihac Bank, which had handled Agrokomerc's business, started. The whole region was in trouble because the very same bank handled most businesses in the area. Therefore, it was not only Agrokomerc that was bankrupt, it was the whole of western Bosnia. This fact put the whole republic under even more pressure, which the leaders felt harder still because of the broader aspects of the scandal.

BROADER ASPECTS OF THE SCANDAL

This storm in the top ranks of the party was the consequence of the long lasting economic crisis of the 1980s. The rulers in Bosnia-Herzegovina were celebrated for their achievements during previous years, but they were becoming increasingly unpopular due to the growing poverty in society and because they had no clear vision of how to solve the problems. They still firmly controlled the media and the whole system which, despite many problems, seemed to be very stable. The security apparatus worked very well and there were still no incidents in the republic that might have suggested that the system was not functioning properly. It was Agrokomerc that changed everything and destroyed the basis for such rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The scandal, which was relatively local, had already ended the political career of Pozderac, one of the most influential officials in the republic. The leaders were also aware of the economic situation, which was far from acceptable, and dissent was felt, although not very strongly, among many employees in the republic. If the Agrokomerc Scandal had happened at a more prosperous time, one would hardly have expected such consequences. As the system, both in political and economic spheres, was in a deep crisis, the consequences were radical for the ruling elite. Until the Agrokomerc Scandal it was relatively easy for the elite to explain the situation and 'temporary obstacles' in development. After it was uncovered, they had to defend their own positions seriously in a situation that was working absolutely against them.

All political problems were clearly reflected in the economy. It could also be argued that it was the economy that caused political problems but, as the politicians ruled over economic issues, popular revolt was against political circles. In October 1987, inflation went up to 135.9 per cent, 12.2 per cent more than a month earlier.⁴⁸ The economic conditions were so bad that the Ljubljana Workers Union in Slovenia initiated a procedure, although without result, to sack

TABLE 2

MINIMUM MONTHLY AMOUNT (IN DINARS) FOR THE SURVIVAL OF AN AVERAGE FAMILY

	<i>December 1987</i>	<i>March 1988</i>	<i>June 1988</i>	<i>September 1988</i>	<i>December 1988</i>	<i>January 1989</i>
Yugoslavia	434,103	518,736	723,776	986,317	1,519,783	1,701,058
Bosnia-Herzegovina	399,304	458,122	648,877	888,596	1,442,366	1,584,776

Source: Institute for Self-Management, Zagreb (1989).

the Federal Government.⁴⁹ In November, the economic situation was even worse. The Yugoslav dinar lost 13 per cent of its value in relation to the American dollar in a period of only three days, 5–8 November.⁵⁰ Furthermore, on 18 November the dinar was devalued by 24.6 per cent bringing the month's devaluation to 37 per cent while, for example, during the whole of 1982 it was only 37 per cent.⁵¹ The economy of Bosnia-Herzegovina suffered a further 4.8 per cent taxation of its profits, which brought taxes up to 53 per cent of the whole profit.⁵² This certainly contributed further to popular anger.

Economic factors can be regarded as the basis for growing unrest. However, it seems that both factors, political and economic, should be taken together in consideration of the causes of this situation. The 'Institute for Self-Management' (Zavod za samoupravljanje), based in Zagreb, found in its survey the minimum monthly amount for the survival of an average family (Table 2).⁵³ Bosnia-Herzegovina was just below the Yugoslav average. As the survey was based on the cost of the same products in every quarter, it provides an approximate measure of the rise in prices and demonstrates how ordinary citizens experienced the inflation rate. The minimum financial means for simple survival in Bosnia-Herzegovina went up by 361 per cent during 1988. In February 1989 the rise in prices, compared to the same period during the previous year, was 346 per cent.⁵⁴

These economic conditions, added to the political problems at the top of the party brought popular dissent and protests onto the streets of the major cities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, the party and its leadership lost popular legitimacy, the proof of which could be seen in a series of public protests. In September 1987, students took to the streets in Sarajevo for the first time in almost 20 years. However, the reasons were not political but, one could say, economic and, although much less so, academic. With regards to the Agrokomerc case, it disturbed the leadership in Sarajevo and was a sign that citizens might dare to protest on the streets against official policy. Thus, the causes of the students' dissent were not connected with high politics, but they nevertheless brought more fears into governing circles and set an example to dissatisfied workers.

The miners of the Tuzla region started a wave of strike actions on 20 November 1987. They were promised a 60 per cent rise in their salaries but, despite

the decision, there was no money available even for their original salaries, which had already been late for several months. The miners from Kakanj, in central Bosnia, followed their example ten days later with industrial action, and many other workers followed their lead.⁵⁵ The League of Workers' Unions of Banja Luka demanded 100 per cent higher salaries for all employees. The workers were not the only ones to struggle to survive: 1.2 million chickens out of 2.3 million in Agrokomerc were starved almost to death. There was no money for food to feed them.⁵⁶ Even the highest-ranking officials did not cope well. The President of the Federal Presidency was paid DM250 per month at the end of 1987.⁵⁷ The GDP per capita was measured at US\$4,500,⁵⁸ while the inflation rate for 1987 was 152 per cent.⁵⁹ The Federal Government, led by Branko Mikulic, was under great pressure. His economic programme for the following year attracted 511 official objections, expressed by individuals and institutions through the political system.

The economic problems were acknowledged by the Central Committee at the session on 25 December 1987. The main concerns were about the growing dissatisfaction of Agrokomerc's workers, numerous strikes, the lack of planned changes in the economic conditions, economic stagnation and recession. Information about this was no longer a matter of official announcements, but the subject of media reporting. The public had ever more information and nobody could have stopped the wave of criticisms and demands for changes. Even the Bosnian media was involved in investigative journalism. Radio France International, the BBC, *Le Monde*, AFP (Agence France Presse) and other foreign agencies reporting from Yugoslavia gave all the credit to the domestic media for the handling of the scandal and the following of political events. Media chiefs in Bosnia-Herzegovina were frightened for their own positions and did not try to prevent journalists from professional reporting. Political bosses no longer dared to order what kind of information should be given out.

All institutions felt the consequences of the scandal. Resignations were common amongst all of them: banks, the Chamber of Industry, companies, media organizations and political institutions at all levels. Thus, political bosses lost their control over society and were unable even to influence it enough in order to preserve their own positions. This was the first part of a chain of events to break, and consequently liberate society, from an almost absolute political control. But many of the leading politicians still retained their positions, although most of them were on the lists of those whose responsibility should be investigated and determined. The session of the Bosnian Central Committee of 23 October 1987 provided an opportunity for the mutual criticisms of members because they all started to fight for their own positions. Monolithism, as a major characteristic of the Bosnian leadership, was broken. Finally, there were signs of a plurality in society after all the years of monolithic politics. As one analyst described the situation in the republic:

After setting up gigantic companies (SOUR) in Bosnia, the republic's state-political leadership have named their own people for general managers

(which were willing to obey, but also, it seems so, were competent)... The system has functioned almost without problems ...until the Agrokomerc scandal. New Bosnian self-consciousness was produced exactly on the successes of this model and on the 'Sarajevo school of media charm'. In politics...it was characterized by a political monolithism and Yugoslav profiled political iconography, showing itself as the strongest link of the chain of the federation. Agrokomerc has shaken everything.⁶⁰

The collapse of monolithic politics produced some differences in the forms of protest in Bosnia-Herzegovina compared to the rest of Yugoslavia. The workers and citizens took to the streets more often in Sarajevo and other industrial centres in the republic. Visiting the highest institutions, not only demonstrating in front of the buildings, had become a common form of protest. The fact that protesters visited the highest institutions might seem to illustrate the remaining legitimacy of the top political bodies, but it more accurately reflects dissent and a public direction of blame towards the institutions. When workers of Energoinvest-Armature marched to the republic's Parliament in Sarajevo in June 1988, it made the headlines. Only six months later, such marches no longer even made the news. On 25 May 1988, the anniversary of Tito's birthday, 320 miners from Djurdjevik and Zivinice, both in Bosnia, went to protest at Tito's grave. Earlier, the Federal Parliament had been the target of demonstrators from Mosevac and Milici, both villages in Bosnia, who protested against the local rulers' despotism. Farmers from Bijeljina protested because of the expropriation of land, while 1,500 Agrokomerc workers came to the Federal Parliament in 23 buses on 15 July 1988.

There were 3,964 fewer workers employed by Agrokomerc at the end of 1988 than there had been a year earlier.⁶¹ The remaining were paid minimum wages and unrest was growing. Around 1,300 Agrokomerc employees arrived in Sarajevo in February 1989. The protests of underpaid workers were widespread. Employees of Sarajevo-Film also went to the republic's Parliament to seek justice. Metal workers from Zenica attracted public attention with their strike during the same month. The strangest action came from northern Bosnia. Workers from two refineries took court action against the State of Yugoslavia to secure better conditions for their refineries.⁶²

The structure of the economy in Bosnia-Herzegovina was a special problem. The construction and energy-based industries represented 40 per cent of the whole economy, while it was only around 24 per cent in the rest of Yugoslavia.⁶³ The economic policy of the Federal Government during the late 1980s hit these parts of the economy the hardest. A large defence industry, which was always in a privileged position, was based in the republic but it could not change the situation significantly. The important changes would only come with the new economic policy of the Federal Government, which was announced at the end of 1989.

Under these conditions in society, leading politicians started personal struggles for political survival. Unity was broken and therefore the system, as it had existed for almost two decades, became defenceless. One of its major characteristics was monolithic rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Once unity was taken away, other problems started to appear and the whole system imploded. Agrokomerc brought about such consequences because of the scale of its financial operations and its close connections with the ruling elite. Even if unity had not been broken at the time, the scale of Agrokomerc's debts was too high to be covered up quietly and would have come out sooner or later. Another point is that, in practice, the system did not allow companies to fall into bankruptcy. If the logic of liberal capitalism had been followed the company would have been worth more than the debts it had produced and, with the sale of some factories and property, further redundancies and new management, it would not have collapsed entirely, with such an impact on the whole republic. However, it was a heavily controlled economy dictated by politics. Hence, any major economic problem became a political affair.

Although it might seem that a kind of democratization established some roots after the Agrokomerc Scandal, some parts of the regime were even stronger, though only temporarily. The danger of replacing one kind of authoritarian regime with another is ever-present in societies with no experience in democracy and no developed concept of civil society: this was the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Any analysis of politics and society has to focus, first and foremost, on elite politics because of the tight control from the top and the lack of democratic instruments. Only those already in power have the chance to address problems publicly and they are the only ones who have a chance of getting any kind of support.

The police apparatus in Bosnia-Herzegovina came out of the Agrokomerc scandal even stronger than before. The Police Minister, Dusko Zgonjanin, led a kind of campaign to determine who was responsible for all misconduct in the handling of the consequences of Agrokomerc's businesses. The Police Minister used public frustration to his own advantage. At the meeting of the Republic's Conference of the Socialist Alliance, he named all of those who supported the police in solving the Agrokomerc case. This unprecedented event became even more grotesque a day later, on 4 November 1987, when he added the name of Nikola Stojanovic, a member of the Republic's Presidency.⁶⁴ In other words, he marked those who were not guilty, although this was only in his own opinion. However, for a while, nobody survived in their post unless they had been named in Zgonjanin's speech.

Ethnicity, however hard one looks into the immediate post-Agrokomerc period, was not yet an issue. Minister Zgonjanin was a Serb, his deputy was a Croat, and the Head of the Secret Police was a Moslem. They were all united in the police crusade at the time. The list of 'clean politicians' was also a multi-ethnic one. Zgonjanin was one of the elite and his list clearly showed the start of a political battle at the top. Accusations and counter-accusations became the means of short-term political survival. As control over the media was loosened,

if in existence at all, the intra-party struggle was public knowledge. The consequence was even louder public dissent.

The media seemed to be coming into its maturity and freedom, though not yet there completely. The main executor of the rulers' orders, Smiljko Sagolj, was forced first to resign from his post with TV Sarajevo and later, in February 1988, the Journalists' Association he had headed sacked him. (Ironically, he was to become an even more brutal Croat nationalist in the 1990s than he had been a hardline communist in previous decades) The leaders could not protect themselves any longer and, therefore, the bosses they had installed lost their positions and influence in the media. This was the first real step towards democratizing society.

The political struggle was brutal. From a once quiet, closed system of patronage, it became an open 'free for all' system and this only contributed further to the implosion. All the highest institutions were forced to discuss the responsibility of the highest officials at their public sessions, which were very often broadcast live on TV-Sarajevo. The Alliance of Working People demanded an investigation into the responsibilities of many top officials.⁶⁵ At the same session, on 26 November 1987, Ferhat Kotoric, a former leader, was forced to resign the membership. Readers' letters and radio talk-programmes revealed a huge number of opinions very critical of the leaders and of the system. A kind of rebellion of the lower party ranks stormed those at the top. It went so far that the war veterans' organization (SUBNOR BiH) named the Speaker of Parliament as the person most responsible for the slowness in uncovering the Agrokomerc scandal.⁶⁶ Three days later, Parliament punished the Speaker with a very serious penalty according to the rules for Parliament procedure.⁶⁷ Some very high-ranking managers were forced from their positions or even sacked and expelled from party ranks as the chain of uncovered scandals grew.⁶⁸

Calls for resignations became common. The rulers could not resist and one after another they resigned from their posts. Novka Suko, a delegate in the Republic's Parliament, called for the resignations of all those involved in the Agrokomerc scandal.⁶⁹ It was the most radical demand heard from someone who was a part, though not a very high ranking part, of the establishment. The media, especially in the other Yugoslav republics, was carefully investigating all the misconduct of the 'lords' in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It got the elite into even more trouble because the public was continually learning of their leaders' 'despotism', as their rule was often described in the Yugoslav press. A hardline Interior Minister gave a clear picture of the troubled elite:

During the last year, sixty articles were published and one film was screened talking about Bosnia-Herzegovina as a dogmatic and Stalinist community. These attacks were based on the Agrokomerc scandal, a Mosevac case, crimes in the mining works in Vlasenica, an attack on the police building in Miljevina, murder of two citizens in Glamoc, a trial of Husein Cuk in Sarajevo, a case of anonymous information on alleged

existence of the 'New Communist Party of Yugoslavia' and 'Independent Unions'.⁷⁰

Public demand led journalists to investigate further into the misconduct of the elite. Newly uncovered scandals started appearing regularly in the media and during discussions in the political institutions. A perfect example of the suddenness of the changes, and also of the slowness of the system to adapt, is the case of Fikret Abdic. He was awarded a Medal of Work with the Red Flag 'for his special credits and achieved results in a work of importance for the country's progress'.⁷¹ The decision was made by the Federal Presidency on 16 July 1987—three months after the Agrokomerc scandal was discovered, albeit still kept a secret from the public. What was worse, the decision was announced in the state's official bulletin when Abdic had already been in jail for two months.

The leading politicians were totally on the defensive and in fear of the growing pressure to resign. Some of them even refused to move into a specially constructed building with flats for their use. Letters to the newspapers and even journalists were trying to discover the list of future tenants of the building, popularly named after the character Carrington, a millionaire from the American soap opera 'Dynasty'. The Sarajevo Town Council was forced to announce the future owners, but the names of the tenants were not available because the Council withdrew their rights. Thus, only the institutions remained as the owners of the flats: parliament owned 4 flats, the Central Committee and the Republic's Presidency two each and the government and the Town's Council were the owners of three flats each. The remaining flats were owned by other high institutions, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁷²

Once the top of the ruling party had been radically shaken, the whole organization proved to be very weak. During the first half of 1987, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2,201 members left the party. Workers represented 64 per cent of all those who had left the League of Communists, while more than 1,000 villages were without the party organization. This meant that one fifth of all villages in the republic were beyond any official influence.⁷³ It was, however, only the beginning of the trend.

Many different reasons could be found for the new trend of deserting the party. The economic problems forced ordinary people to think twice before spending, and this also included payment of the party membership fee. The lower ranks of the party hierarchy, its ordinary members, also lost many of their ideals dating back to the revolution and post-war reconstruction. Discovering leaders who clearly did not suffer the same problems as the rank and file pushed them further from the party. Finally, the whole organization was no longer strong or efficient and membership did not bring the benefits that it had before. Those living in villages were mainly farmers and they were, at the time, more market-orientated than the bureaucrats in the towns. They simply did not have any economic reasons to remain within the party.

Despite increased public pressure, the terrible economic conditions and divided leadership, many of the elite remained in control, albeit loosely, and influential enough to ignore public demands and keep their posts. But giving up the control of many parts of society, including the media, opened a space for uncovering more truths about the system. If Agrokomerc was a case of mismanagement, but was not used for personal gain, the case of the villas in Neum was an obvious example of how personal power was used by the elite to gain personal wealth. Here, in the only Herzegovinian town on the coast, almost all the elite possessed villas. The problem was how they had obtained the land and built the villas. The land was first nationalised and later cultivated. The status of a formerly very small village was changed and Neum became the newest, the 109th, district in the republic. Furthermore, it was declared an underdeveloped territory in order to allow a flow of government money into the community and also to obtain some tax privileges. Beside these aspects, the major problem was that altogether more than 200 villas in Neum were owned by the elite.⁷⁴

When the question of Neum was raised in 1982 by Ante Simic, a local union activist from Zenica, he was punished politically and disappeared from public life immediately after he had dared to inquire about villas owned by the highest leaders. By 1988, the conditions in society had changed and Neum was investigated first by the press and then by political circles, which finally led to the resignations of the remaining leaders in political posts. The leaders lost most of their public credit for the developments and prosperity achieved during the period of a decade and a half. More significantly, because of the scale of the scandals, they destroyed the popular legitimacy of the system. Those who replaced them in the highest posts were in an almost equally bad position since it was the party and the system that took the public blame for mismanagement, nepotism, corruption and the abuse of power by the elite. The elections in 1990 clearly show this fact.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE SYSTEM

Popular dissatisfaction with the party led to a clash within the party: on one side were those who were involved in covering up the scandals and on the other were those who were untainted, allegedly, by corruption. The party went into a stage of internal differentiation—it was too early to talk of democratization, although some efforts were made in this direction, especially by some of the younger members of the political elite. Thus, the two processes of differentiation and of democratization came together at this time. Zdravko Grebo, a newly elected member of the Central Committee, suddenly became the people's voice in the highest institutions: Those people should have honestly been told...that they are leaving as exponents of one politics, one system which lasted as an unseen rule of alienated centres of power.⁷⁵ The voices of these newcomers had some credibility in public, unlike those who had been at the top for all those years and

had abused their power. The institutions seemed to have lost some of their strength and influence over society because individual voices of dissent, such as Grebo's, were not only allowed to be heard, but were heard at the sessions of the highest centres of power. At this stage, one could assume, the system should have improved but it soon turned out that many of the new, democratic voices recently admitted to the party elite became disillusioned and left the struggle. After their partially successful efforts to democratize the party they did very little to democratize society. Society had changed but still remained far from democracy.

This was the end of the total collapse of the ruling elite in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As the system was based on the personal strength of the elite, it can be argued that the system was destroyed. Later events, however, show that the system actually remained in function, although changed and with a lot of difficulties, and only the top ranks suffered political casualties. This state of affairs discredited the communists and most of those connected with the ruling circles. Instead of necessary reforms, both political and economic, they only made some personnel changes. Economic pressure on ordinary citizens was ever greater and these two factors caused people to lose faith in their rulers. By this time, radical, systematic changes were needed but were ignored by those at the top. It was this kind of situation that enabled the rise of nationalism soon afterwards. At the time, it only prepared the ground for such policies.

The rise of a nationalist ideology in neighbouring Serbia during the same period must be noted. Everything was set for the serious undermining of the Sarajevo-based leadership's policy of 'brotherhood and unity'. The lack of serious incidents based on ethnic grounds during 1987 and 1988 proves three hypotheses. Firstly, the system and its security apparatus were still strong despite all the difficulties and criticisms. The system therefore had to be weakened even more if the nationalists, or any other forces, were to have a chance. Secondly, hidden ethnic divisions and hatred were not widespread in society. Thirdly, liberalization and democratization were needed to enable those who felt nationalistic to start ethnic arguments and initiate ethnic debate as a main issue of politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the very late 1980s and 1990s. However, careful observance of inter-ethnic relations and an awareness of the dangers of nationalism remained a fixture of Bosnian politics even after the changes in the elite. A connection between the worsening economic situation and the possible rise of nationalism was recognized by the Central Committee in Sarajevo: 'Almost 600,000 workers are in an extremely difficult situation. Social discontent is growing and there is an alarming number of nationalist incidents.'⁷⁶

The rise of popular nationalism in Serbia seriously threatened to influence events in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Almost one third of the republic's population were Serbs, but the Sarajevo leadership and the people seemed to be more concerned, at least at the time, with the domestic economic and political problems. Huge public protests and demonstrations were going on in Serbia. After the protests covered the whole territory of Serbia, the organizers wanted to cross the

border and go to Jajce in central Bosnia to organize a meeting. Jajce was regarded as the birthplace of the Second Yugoslavia, hence the importance of the town. The Serbian nationalist meetings became such an obsessive issue that even the troubled Federal Government was pushed out of the headlines. One commentator said, 'Branko Mikulic can be grateful to the numerous meetings for being left together with the whole Federal Government (SIV) without criticism and the other temptations for more than two months.'⁷⁷

Nationalist meetings, however, did not cross the Bosnian border because of the prompt action of the republic's Central Committee in September 1988. Its Presidency announced that 'support could not be given to the organizing of political meetings on an ethnic basis in Bosnia-Herzegovina' and that confronting this issue was necessary by all political and lawful means.⁷⁸ Some ethnic tensions, however, had surfaced a couple of months earlier in Trebinje. Non-identified individuals had thrown a dead pig at the gates of the main mosque in Trebinje on the eve of the May Day holidays. Although it was a rare nationalist incident in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it showed there was some basis for suspecting the spread of nationalism. But as long as the highest institutions of the system remained undivided on ethnic issues, inter-ethnic relations were secured. The leaders of the political organizations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, all of them led by and made up of communists, concluded that the events in Serbia were disturbing the country. Nijaz Durakovic, the future leader of the party, made a typical leadership statement on inter-ethnic relations: 'Bosnia-Herzegovina, as a Yugoslavia in miniature, was always a kind of a seismograph for all pressing questions in the field of inter-ethnic relations in our country.'⁷⁹

Some studies from the period showed inter-ethnic relations still to be rather good. The survey covered 1,090 people of whom 65 per cent ethnically declared themselves. The rest were Yugoslavs or non-declared. Eighty-one point six per cent of them expressed a positive attitude towards Yugoslavism, which was used as a term for togetherness and mutual respect in the common state. Exactly the same attitude was found among the surveyed Serbs and Croats (79.6 per cent), while even more Moslems and Yugoslavs showed such positive attitudes—83.9 per cent and 86.2 per cent respectively.⁸⁰

There were 57,586 Yugoslavs in the 409,165-strong membership of the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1986, while a year later that number was higher at 64,075, although the total number of members had dropped to 392,576. Agrokomerc had happened meanwhile, which explains the difference. In the district of Sarajevo-Centre every fourth member of the party declared his ethnic-belonging as Yugoslav.⁸¹

All this meant that those without, or with less strong, ethnic feelings would rather join the party than the rest of the population. However, the 1991 census would show that 22 per cent of the Sarajevo-Centre population declared themselves as Yugoslavs, which was just below the average in the League of Communists' membership four years earlier. The number of Yugoslavs in society meanwhile almost halved, which gave the final impression that stronger

ethnic feelings were either preventing individuals from entering the party or were persuading them to resign from the ranks of the League of Communists.

Although the party was rather weak in 1988, it was still united in resisting any nationalism. Hence, there were some attempts from outside Bosnia-Herzegovina to destabilize the country along ethnic lines. The Belgrade-based press published a series of articles on an incident involving the destruction of the partisans' cemetery in Kupres. They even named a few Bosnian leaders of Croat ethnicity and alleged their responsibility for the incident.⁸² It is hard, however, to find any basis to these claims. The fact was that the cemetery where mainly Serbs were buried was damaged by unknown individuals, possibly some of the supporters of a future Croat nationalist movement, which was not strongly organized at the time. These writings said more about the state of the Belgrade press and the increasing nationalism there, than about the Bosnian rulers mentioned in the articles. None of them joined any nationalist movements when these were formed later on, nor made any nationalist statements.

The Bosnian press finally awoke in July 1988 when the magazine 'Nasi Dani' published two articles full of criticism of Slobodan Milosevic and his policy. The articles were so strong that some criticism even came from the Central Committee of Bosnia-Herzegovina, although they, too, expressed criticisms of Milosevic's populism.⁸³

The appearance of the first divisions along ethnic lines within the political elite came only after this long period of destabilization of the system in Bosnia-Herzegovina on non-ethnic grounds, and the rise of nationalism in Serbia. The leaders did not show any breaks along ethnic lines for almost two years after Milosevic's rise. There were no indications that a serious nationalist threat to society in Bosnia-Herzegovina would happen without two conditions being fulfilled: economic and political turbulence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the rise of nationalism in the neighbouring republic. Therefore, outside influence from any of the neighbours, coming at a time of great economic and political crisis, was *sine qua non* for the destabilization of society.

The old elite had been replaced but the new leaders were actually coming from the second echelon of the old system. Thus major changes, the necessity of which was to be proved, were prevented when the highest posts were secured for second-class politicians instead of allowing some younger, more competent and ambitious newcomers to try to reform and rehabilitate the party. This step would inevitably lead to their indefinite loss of power and influence. Thus, an empty place of power was created, as Ivan Vejvoda argued about the situation at a federal level some time later.⁸⁴ In Bosnia-Herzegovina some analysts saw the core of the problem in a similar light: 'Economic reform is impossible without the political one and they are both unachievable without the reform of the party.'⁸⁵

Efforts were made to prevent further differentiation, while the democratization of the party and society was still far away. The only democratic gain so far was the freedom, though not complete, of the media and public criticism. But the consequences of the scandals and the end of strong rule were felt everywhere.

Radical changes were necessary but they were delayed because of incompetence, the newly installed leaders' fear of the unknown and also the remaining quiet influence of the replaced elite. The communists tried to break with the old practice and problems by organizing the Conference of the League of Communists. It took place in very bad circumstances, as the newspapers described:

In party discussions that preceded the Conference, the members were 'with no precedent severe towards their leadership' but also towards the Communist League because of the collaboration in producing an unfavourable situation. It was even demanded that the leaders should be banned from attending the Conference.⁸⁶

The opinion of the analysts was not very different from the party leaders' attitude towards the situation in which they had found themselves: 'After the Agrokomerc, we are certainly on the defensive. We are well troubled, a bit thrown into panic and, what is worst, we are frightened.'⁸⁷

Although the conference was used for loud criticism in an effort to consolidate the party's ranks, it became obvious, very soon after it ended, that the business was not finished. The reshuffled leadership had to continue with the 'differentiation' within the ranks. This term was widely used to distinguish those not connected with the scandals from the ones who were to be blamed. The latter even lost legitimacy within the party, as the conference showed. During its course, it was often mistaken for democratization although it was really only a fight amongst the ranks of the highest communist institutions. Many members of other ruling bodies were going into retirement or were resigning from their posts on the grounds of bad health.

Public pressure and 'health problems' caused personnel problems for the ruling institutions. Politicians were pardoned from obligatory retirement at the age of 60, but in the summer of 1988 this was abolished. Not only those involved in the scandals resigned or retired, but some were also forced to resign by law. Three members of the Republic's Presidency, four members of the League of Communists' leadership, one government minister and four general managers of large companies, had to retire because of their age.

It was in May when, both traditionally and legally, all reshuffles within the ruling bodies had to be made. In 1988, the consequences of the scandals discovered a year earlier had an impact and problems appeared in the procedure. Mato Andric, President of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, was supposed to continue for a second one-year term, but the youth organization raised objections. Although there were no elections, the procedure gave many institutions and organizations the opportunity to influence personnel policy. Andric gave up his candidacy one day after the objections from the youth organization became public. A newcomer into high politics was named the President of the Presidency as there was nobody available from the old ruling elite.⁸⁸

Even the announcement of the new government in Sarajevo was delayed. None of the candidates for the post of Prime Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina secured the necessary support from the youth organization. There were two candidates for the post of Parliament Speaker. Neither of them got enough votes in Parliament, partly because there were 43 invalid votes, which were in fact votes of protest. Former high rulers were not only leaving their posts but were subjected to the party's criticism and public humiliation. In May 1988, the Central Committee discussed how much Celic and Mesihovic, the former Parliament Speaker and the former leading member of the Republic's Presidency, were responsible for the whole situation. However, although they experienced some personal discomfort, they were not especially punished. The rest of the rulers were subject to more or less the same procedure.

All reported cases of corruption, nepotism, incompetence or misjudgement attracted blame on the leaders. One has to note, however, that none of the long list of scandals was caused by nationalism. But with the effective implosion of the system, forced radical personnel changes at the top and the deepening economic crisis, it was only a question of time before nationalism became an issue. One could easily argue that had it not been for Milosevic's wave of nationalism in Serbia, it might have been possible to avoid the ethnic issue altogether. This was not to be the case, although, at that time, it had not become the most important issue.

Those who were not troubled by their own ethnic sympathies experienced different kinds of problems. After the Agrokomerc scandal had taken 51 politicians from their posts, in the autumn of 1988, the process was continued. The Bosnian-Herzegovinian Central Committee held a session on the Neum scandal and a working group was formed to investigate the allegations.⁸⁹ It was ten months after the first articles had appeared in the press. This led, by the end of the year, to the final stage for the generation of previous rulers. The 'last of the Mohicans' were leaving politics: all members of the Republic's Presidency had either resigned or retired. The same step was taken by many other high-ranking politicians in the Central Committee, important government ministries and large companies. One third, that is 44 members, of the Central Committee and six members of its Presidency were changed.

The circle, started in 1972, was closed by the initiative of the Council of the Republic, the institution made up of the old, retired, former leaders. Their party organization made the headlines on 15 November 1988 when they demanded the return of Cedo Kapor to the party membership. He was one of four revolutionaries thrown out of the party ranks in the early 1970s, when the generation now leaving had secured their indefinite power.

Many understand that the elimination of Humo, Karabegovic, Kapetanovic and Kapor, through the personal holders of political power, had opened a space for the so-called monolithism of the leadership in Bosnia. It has

degenerated later into practice with farreaching consequences. The sublimated name for these is Neum and Agrokomerc.⁹⁰

Thus, after 16 years in total power, the whole elite left or was about to leave political life in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Those who were removed from the scene, to enable Mikulic, Pozderac, Renovica and the others to get a firm grip on power, were rehabilitated. The party lost popular legitimacy while, ironically, the outgoing leaders achieved great results in terms of the republic's development. However, their reluctance to leave the highest posts, despite strong public pressure, damaged further the party's credibility in society. The incoming leaders were left with the task of transforming the party, the economy and the system, in conditions totally unfavourable both internally and externally. It was only then, after the destruction of strong rule and the implosion of the system in Bosnia-Herzegovina, that nationalism entered the political scene and started to spread within society.

NOTES

1. Mazower, M., *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: The Penguin Press, 1998), p. 369.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 373.
3. *Vjesnik*, 20 August 1987, pp. 1–12.
4. *Vjesnik*, 22 August 1987, pp. 1–12.
5. *Danas*, 15 August 1989, p. 17, stated the poverty index at over 280, while *Oslobodjenje*, 15 March 1989, p. 3 put it at 215.
6. *Nin*, 3 January 1988, p. 8.
7. *Nin*, 25 December 1988, pp. 9 and 11.
8. *Statisticki godisnjak Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1988), p. 248.
9. *Danas*, 27 September 1988, p. 21.
10. The Assembly of SFRJ, 15 May 1988, reported in all Yugoslav press; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
11. The Federal Government's decision of 28 May 1988, reported in all Yugoslav press; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
12. The official course of the Yugoslav dinar given by the National Bank.
13. Koceljavec, Dusan, in *Vecernje Novosti*, 16 May 1988, quoted in *Nin*, 22 May 1988, p. 7.
14. Kolar, Josip, member of the Council of the Yugoslav Trade Unions, in *Danas*, 3 May 1988, p. 7.
15. Federal Trade Union's statement of September 1988; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
16. *Nin*, 25 December 1988, p. 8.
17. *Danas*, 13 December 1988, p. 17.
18. *Vjesnik*, 1 January 1989.
19. *Nedjelja*, 26 March 1989 pp. 14–15.

20. Czechoslovakian Telegraph Agency, according to *Vjesnik*, 4 January 1989.
21. Mikulic, Branko, in all Yugoslav press during November 1988.
22. *Vjesnik*, 9 January 1989, p. 4.
23. *Vjesnik*, 4 January 1989.
24. Federal minister Oskar Kovac, in *Oslobodjenje*, 15 March 1989, p. 1.
25. The Presidency of SSOJ decision of 26 January 1988; Tanjug report, Omladinski Radio Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
26. 'Mamula Go Home', in *Mladina*, Ljubljana, 12 February 1988.
27. 'SANU Memorandum' in Nase *Teme*, *casopis za drustvena pitanja*, Zagreb, 1989, issues 1–2, p. 128.
28. Dyker, D.A., The Degeneration of the Yugoslav Communist Party as a Managing Elite—a Familiar East European Story?', in D.A.Dyker and I.Vejvoda (eds), *Yugoslavia and After: A Study in Fragmentation, Despair and Rebirth* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman Publishers, 1996) pp. 55–6.
29. Even in present Bosnia, after the war and all the changes, the discussion concerning the origins and consequences of this scandal is very passionate. The analysts repeatedly use it as a crucial argument in one direction or another. Therefore I will try to offer a thorough chronology and analysis of the events which were not widely reported in the West and were not taken into account by many western authors on Bosnia-Herzegovina.
30. *Vjesnik*, 29 October 1987, pp. 1–12.
31. *Nin*, 15 May 1988, p. 25.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
33. *Vjesnik*, 20 August 1987, pp. 1–12.
34. Uzelac, Milan, research interview (June 1996).
35. *Nin*, 22 May 1988, p. 27.
36. *Vjesnik*, 20 August 1987.
37. *Vjesnik*, 22 August 1987.
38. *Vjesnik*, 7 July 1987.
39. The Federal Bureau for Statistics, July 1987; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
40. *Vjesnik*, 20 August 1987, pp. 1–12.
41. SDK Yugoslavia, public statement in *Vjesnik*, 20 August 1987, pp. 1–12.
42. Mastruko, Ivica, in *Nin*, 22 May 1988, p. 27.
43. Jovic, Borisav, in film research interviews and material for the documentary series 'Death of Yugoslavia', Brian Lapping Associates for the BBC (1995–96), (private collection, Tihomir Loza).
44. Most of the Sarajevo government-controlled media was explaining events in this sense during 1992 and the following years.
45. *Vjesnik*, 3 September 1987, pp. 1–16.
46. Mikulic, Branko, at CK SK BiH, 25 December 1987; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a), 25 December 1987.
47. The census of 1991 showed the population of Velika Kladusa to be 52,921. Moslems made up 92% of the population, while in a nearby Cazin 98% out of 63,406 citizens were Moslems.
48. Federal Bureau for Statistics; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
49. Council of Unions, Ljubljana on 4 November 1987; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).

50. The official course given by the Yugoslav National Bank.
51. *Vjesnik*, 26 November 1987, p. 1.
52. *Danas*, 27 September 1988, p. 33.
53. *Vjesnik*, 24 January 1989, p. 12.
54. *Vjesnik*, 3 March 1989, p. 6.
55. *Vjesnik*, 13 December 1987, p. 3.
56. *Vjesnik*, 11 December 1987, p. 4.
57. *Vjesnik*, 29 November 1987, p. 3.
58. *The Economist* (London, December 1987), published in *Vjesnik*, 25 December 1987.
59. *Danas*, 5 April 1988, p. 9.
60. Jajcinovic, Milan, in *Danas*, 12 July 1988, p. 22.
61. *Vjesnik*, 19 January 1989, p. 6.
62. *Vjesnik*, 15 February 1989, p. 4.
63. *Borba*, 20 December 1989, p. 4.
64. *Oslobodjenje*, 5 December 1987, pp. 1–9.
65. The most important were: Savo Cecur, Josip Lovrenovic, Zarko Kolenda, Kazimir Jelcic and Hrvoje Istuk.
66. SUBNOR BiH, 21 December 1987, reported in *Oslobodjenje*, 22 December 1987; pp. 1–8.
67. The Parliament of Bosnia, 24 December 1987, reported in *Oslobodjenje*, 25 December 1987, pp. 1–9.
68. The best-known example is of Stanko Tomic, general manager of RMK-Zenica.
69. A session of the Parliament of Bosnia in December 1987, TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
70. Zgonjanin, Dusko, in *Danas*, 8 March 1988, p. 27.
71. Sluzbeni list SFRJ, 6 November 1987; Omladinski Radio Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
72. The Sarajevo Town Council, 20 November 1987, in *Oslobodjenje*, 21 November 1987, pp. 1–12.
73. A session of CK SK BiH, 25 December 1987; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
74. *Danas*, 4 October 1988.
75. Grebo, Zdravko, at CK SK BiH, 25 December 1987; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
76. Tasic, Dzevad (member of the Presidency of the Central Committee) at the meeting with officials from the lower rank committees, according to *Vjesnik*, 20 January 1989, p. 6.
77. Zagorac, Djuro, in *Danas*, 4 October 1988, p. 7.
78. Announcement of the Presidency of CK SK BiH, in *Danas*, 6 September 1988.
79. Durakovic, Nijaz, in his speech near Zenica on 27 July 1988; in *Oslobodjenje*, 28 July 1988; pp. 1–3.
80. Bakic, Ibrahim, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Ethnic Studies of the CK SK BiH, in *Danas*, 6 September 1988, p. 14.
81. Lovric, Jelena, in *Danas*, 6 December 1988, p. 8.
82. *Student*, Belgrade, 10 June 1988, and many other Belgrade-based press.
83. The titles of the articles were ‘State, Give Me the State’ [Drzavu, dajte mi drzavu] and ‘The Dictator Has Arrived’ [Vozd je stigao].

84. Vejvoda, I., 'Yugoslavia 1945–1991', in Dyker and Vejvoda (eds), *Yugoslavia and After*.
85. Culic, Marinko, in *Danas*, 1 November 1988.
86. Lovric, Jelena, in *Danas*, 19 April 1988, p. 9.
87. Durakovic, Nijaz, in *Danas*, 29 March 1988, p. 27.
88. A University of Sarajevo professor, Nikola Filipovic, became the new highestranked official in the republic.
89. CK SK BiH session, 14 October 1988, in *Oslobodjenje*, 15 October 1988, pp. 1–5.
90. Mijovic, Vlastimir, in *Danas*, 29 November 1988, p. 23.

Civil Society: Its Emergence and Its Limits

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

The crisis of the ruling system opened up new possibilities for public discussion of political issues. This situation was unprecedented in the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina under communist rule. After Agrokomerc and the scandals that followed, one could find signs of public discontent with the political elite. Calls for reforms became louder, while some tried to mobilize politics for specific issues, such as university administration, human rights and the pollution of the environment. Under the impact of reform elsewhere in eastern Europe, some efforts to form political organizations outside the influence and control of the communist elite were recorded. All this led to a situation that heralded the detachment of society from the political system and consequently to the emergence of civil society.

‘Civil society’ as a term is widely accepted, but its substance needs to be discussed. The first problem is to determine those ideas and organizations that would constitute civil society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I accept the view that civil society has to be sufficiently broad so that it can be presented as ‘an ability to control those who are in power’.¹ This is the definition adopted by Gellner:

Civil Society is that set of diverse non-governmental institutions which is strong enough to counterbalance the state and, while not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent it from dominating and atomizing the rest of society.²

The autonomy of such institutions is a key precondition for an ability to control the state. As Gellner put it, ‘Civil Society is a cluster of institutions and associations strong enough to prevent tyranny, but which are, none the less, entered and left freely, rather than imposed by birth or sustained by awesome ritual.’³

Other definitions of the term were in many ways similar, but one has to note historical development in determining civil society. John Keane has found that,

until the eighteenth century, civil society was described as, '... a type of political association which places its members under the influence of its laws and thereby ensures peaceful order and good government'.⁴ This view was based on classical theories, most notably of Aristotle and Cicero, and understood the state and civil society as the same thing. This is certainly not the case in modern discussions about civil society, in which the conceptual agreement is a refusal to identify civil society with the state. However, more recent theories, many of them Marxist, have been based on Hegel's view of civil society and have denied its independence and the notion that civil society opposes the state and thus controls it. According to this view, described by Keane, civil society, '...is viewed as a self-crippling entity in constant need of state supervision and control'.⁵

During the long period of communist reign, civil society was mainly viewed according to these kinds of theories. Socialist self-management and its system of delegates was intended to replace the need for independent organizations of free citizenry that could influence and control the state. There was no space during the long period of Tito's Yugoslavia (and Bosnia-Herzegovina within it) for a civil society because of the very roots of this state. In the more general terms of totalitarianism, as Giddens has accepted Friedrich's argument, the characteristics of such a state prevented the emergence of civil society.⁶ These characteristics are: a totalist ideology, a single party committed to it, a strong secret-police apparatus and monopolies of mass communications, operational weapons and of all organizations.

A crisis in the Yugoslav economy and political system first brought about dissent within the system's institutions. A more widespread popular discontent with the rulers came later. These two processes liberated social space where free citizenry influenced, if not controlled, political processes. Civil society only emerged in the late 1980s and was rather weak. Therefore the full control of political processes was not achieved. The citizenry managed to influence only some of the processes, but this was a significant step for Bosnia-Herzegovina where society did not really exist in this sense during firm communist rule. Ivan Vejvoda argues that communism was a regime, '...in which the key division line for modern democratic politics and society between state and civil society had been obliterated or whose appearance had been impeded'.⁷

This clearly distinguishes conditions under which societies developed in Communist Europe. One might argue that processes in eastern Europe during the 1980s were based on the experience of liberal democracies in western Europe during the nineteenth century. However, there were important historical differences and, therefore, such a conclusion leads in the wrong direction. A powerful middle class won rights over a small political elite in nineteenth-century western Europe, which consequently led to the establishment of liberal democracy. But the situation in eastern Europe in the 1980s was far from similar. The political elite was also small, but it was united in a single party and was extremely powerful, while the elite in western Europe was fragmented. The

middle class in eastern Europe was not powerful: one could even raise the question of its existence.

What is certain is that the middle class in communist states was actually created by the dominant political elite for its own purposes. Therefore, the basis of society was significantly different in nineteenth-century western Europe to eastern Europe during the 1980s. It was because of these very different historical circumstances that the emergence of civil society did not lead to liberal democracies in post-communist Europe. However, even as late as 1989, when civil society emerged in Bosnia-Herzegovina more strongly, the ideas and actions of organizations and individuals gave an impression of '...liberal conceptions of citizenship and sovereign rights being more important than nationalism'.⁸

The reason could be that civil society was an urban phenomenon in Bosnia-Herzegovina and elitist in essence, just like state politics. The emergence and the limits of civil society after Agromerc will be explored alongside the different forms it took and its limited impact upon subsequent events. It won a major battle, that is, the collapse of a single-party system in favour of multiparty elections, but during the pre-electoral period it became clear that ethnic issues, and not ideological politics or economics, would dominate a multiparty system in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

MANIFESTATIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The idea of self-managing enterprises, non-aligned foreign policy during the Cold War period and a very diverse system of governing, albeit complicated, sounded positive in theory. Even in practice, it had support during prosperous times. The economic crisis destroyed this self-congratulatory atmosphere. It was some time before the first efforts to establish civil society bore fruit in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was largely elitist and was concentrated in the capital. In September 1987, a few thousand students marched through the streets of Sarajevo. It was something that had not been seen for decades. The students demanded relaxed exam rules and better food in their canteens, while claiming they were all following the path of the ruling ideology. The students did not offer any alternative to ruling policy and did not even try to achieve influence over the institutions that ruled their lives. Students of other universities were passive. Only the students residing in the university campus were involved, with absolutely no support from other, native Sarajevans. However, the march showed that it was possible to influence and change the system, albeit the university one, by taking action outside the system.

The most important benefit of the protest was the setting up of a students' organization. The regime had resisted any such suggestion for almost two decades. It was a concession possibly initiated by the situation in society and, far more importantly, in the ruling circles. The reaction of these circles was typical. An institution was set up which, in theory, could influence and control decisions

taken concerning students and universities. In practice, it usually meant that the whole process was so complicated that many of the participants would become disillusioned and would leave or become passive. The state had used this method to avoid many challenges in the past. This time, it gave students the opportunity to become selforganized, to raise critical voices and, later on, to set up some other organizations that would constitute the core of civil society. Thus, the main manifestation of civil society in Bosnia-Herzegovina was through student actions in Sarajevo.

In the context of the economic crisis and the scandals of 1987 and 1988, the regime's control had relaxed by the beginning of 1988. This created some space for civil initiatives. When something new finally emerged, it had some similarities with Slovene patterns of civil society, but with a time lag of a few years. As in Slovenia, the whole process started within youth organizations and was supported by some intellectuals. The situation was well described by Borowiec: 'The young are tired, above all, of slogans, the constant references to Marxism, the regimentation of endless party meetings, and the corruption of the technocrat class.'⁹

When the regime saw the inevitability of granting some freedoms, it chose the youth organizations: they were youngsters and would have time to change their views and revert to the ruling ideology. This was exactly the pattern under which all new ideas appeared first in Slovenia and eventually in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The system allowed more freedom for these organizations, especially during the second part of the 1980s. A very strong network of organizations and influential individuals was already in place in Slovenia through the network of the 'Socialist Youth'. By 1988, Bosnian society witnessed a very similar trend. Hence many organizations that were the front runners for new democratic ideas had in their title the term Youth [Omladinski]. This was even more common in the field of the media.

Inter-university cooperation enabled Sarajevo students to learn how to change policy. Slovene demands for civil society were already very loud and they influenced some Bosnian students. Their initiative for setting up an independent students' organization with support from the official organization of Socialist Youth in Bosnia-Herzegovina followed Slovenia's example and wanted a wider front that would support ideas concerning the protection of human rights, the plurality of the socialist system, control of the federal army and the republic's police, the independence of universities and similar issues.¹⁰

Thus, a semi-independent students' organization, the University Conference of the Alliance of Socialist Youth [Univerzitetska konferencija Saveza socijalisticke omladine, UK SSO], started work in early 1988. It was the first official class-division, albeit at a youth level, as students were separated from their contemporaries. Their interests, rights and duties were certainly different to others and made them a separate class. All the other organizations were formed on a broad basis and represented popular fronts, whereas this one was restricted to a certain membership. Therefore, it should be described as a class-division.

One could see it as a political division also, since different classes usually pursue different political interests. It was not the case, however, at that time, although the new organization changed the image of the youngsters involved in politics. Their example was followed by others in the Socialist Youth organization which became open for the discussion of problematic issues and offered some attractive public appearances. These changes brought more importance to the youth organization and they were even crucial in naming the republic's prime minister and in the other issues of high politics.

The ideas of the students' organization did not have a public outlet. Therefore, it founded its own magazine, *Valter*, in the autumn of 1988. At that time the law demanded an official organization be the founder of every newspaper or magazine. As the only organizations allowed were those effectively in communist hands, all the publications were under their control. The way to create an independent political magazine was, therefore, through an organization that was officially under the 'youth umbrella'. At the end of 1988, the two highest circulating Bosnian political magazines were *Nasi Dani* and *Valter*, both founded by youth organizations.¹¹ The critiques expressed in these magazines and their distance from the governing politicians and ideology forced the other media to follow suit. In Banja Luka, the local youth magazine, *Prelom*, followed their example but was under a great deal of pressure. Typical titles of articles included: 'Comrades Communists Pray to God' and 'Communists and Exclusively Communists are guilty of Everything'.¹²

The main achievement of these magazines could be described as the start of public discussions on many subjects without their being accused of 'counter-revolutionary activity'. It is important to note that at the time the ruling elite was losing confidence in itself because of all the problems explained earlier. Hence, the appearance of the first signs of the main characteristic of civil society: 'Civil Society can check and oppose the state.'¹³ The establishment did not use its power to suppress the new tendencies in the media; one issue of both magazines was banned but after public uproar it never happened again.

The second matter to be tackled after the media gains by students and liberal individuals was human rights. The early activists saw a major danger for themselves in the strong police apparatus that managed to prevent any disturbance of a determined political life. In their work, the police dealt rather brutally with opponents. Hence, this view from Borowiec: There is also the inevitable "other side" to Yugoslavia: shortages and corruption, mismanagement and waste, ethnic contempt, unemployment, frustration with the difficulties of daily life, and the threat of the omnipresent security apparatus, the watchdog of Titoism.'¹⁴

The intelligentsia saw 'the watchdog of Titoism' as a main obstacle to any changes in political patterns. During the initial period of emerging pluralism, the risk of both legal and political persecution of those who stirred up trouble was very high. Therefore, those endangered, or even only concerned with the system, started organizing themselves through initiatives for the protection of human

rights and civil liberties. The Croatian sociologist, Mirjana Kasapovic, found that, These groups had two primary demands. One was recognition and protection of basic civil rights and freedoms. The other was equal opportunity and equal protection under the law (i.e., rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat).¹⁵ This kind of dictatorship was the main target for intellectuals, raising the logical question of whether a society could be democratic if there was any kind of dictatorship, even a proletarian one. In fact, the intelligentsia had been seen as a 'subversive element' in society since the beginning of the second Yugoslavia. The progressive forces of society were often defined as 'workers, peasants and tame intelligentsia'. One of the main aims of the regime had been to divide the intellectual class.

As already mentioned, the students' association demanded more control over the police apparatus after secret-police officers interrogated several students about their connections with Slovene youth organizations. Slovenes had already demanded the dropping of Article 133 of the Federal Criminal Law (verbal delict),¹⁶ under which many were persecuted; the possibility of persecution remained for any individual who publicly expressed their opinions. Some of the students' professors, known for their liberal ideas, supported their demands and even helped them in setting up a Committee for the Protection of Rights and Liberties of Individuals and Groups [Odbor za zastitu prava i sloboda pojedinaca i grupa]. The committee was set up as a part of the students' organization, but with a concern for the whole of society. The founding session was on 14 January 1989 and it attracted a lot of media attention. Subsequently, the police became more cautious in dealing with organized students and liberal intellectuals, but they remained just as brutal in dealing with non-organized masses, especially in the provinces. The students' example shows clearly that when some forces were organized, the regime hesitated to suppress the group and its hesitation provided an opening for ideas to gain more support in society. At this stage, the students achieved the right to express a different opinion. The right, however, was not universal, as developments outside the capital showed.

The village of Mosevac in central Bosnia was where a watershed was reached in the struggle for civil liberties and human rights in Bosnia- Herzegovina. Two community leaders from the village were accused of breaching public order and the police issued a warrant of arrest. It all started when the village leaders came into dispute on some minor, rather unimportant issues with the local district council. The warrant was issued after the local court sentenced the two leaders to several months of imprisonment. The villagers started a real rebellion against the police and the local government from the nearby town of Maglaj. Furthermore, they secured support from some influential, newly organized associations. Some law experts were involved in the Yugoslav Forum for the Protection of Human Rights [Jugoslavenski forum za zastitu prava covjeka], based in Belgrade but with members from Sarajevo as well. They used their knowledge to secure the protection of the basic rights of arrested people in the 'Mosevac case'.

The Sarajevo-based Committee for the Protection of Rights and Liberties of Individuals and Groups organized a public meeting on the state of human rights and liberties in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Two speakers at the meeting were distinguished from the others. Edina Residovic was the President of the Socialist Alliance and, therefore, the system's representative. One participant heavily attacked her both for her past and present roles. She was a district attorney in 1983 when Izetbegovic and his group stood trial. Residovic was even called 'Madam Residovic' instead of 'Comrade Residovic', a first in postwar history.¹⁷ The other speaker was Dzevad Galijasevic of Mosevac village, who sought support in his struggle against local district rulers in Maglaj. Ironically, he was arrested immediately after the meeting and served a sentence of seven months in prison. This police action clearly shows the unchanged face of the regime. Some organizations and individuals had gained some rights and space for public work, but the system was still totalitarian.

Galijasevic immediately started a hunger strike in prison, while human rights groups demanded an explanation of his whereabouts and the pardoning of his sentence. After their public protests, the police were forced to allow a visit and an independent inspection of the conditions in the prison where Galijasevic was held.¹⁸ In Bosnia-Herzegovina it was very unusual to allow any inspection of prison conditions by domestic representatives outside the regime's control. Galijasevic's mother signed a petition addressed to the republic's Presidency asking for a pardon. The Presidency gave one on 27 January 1989, stating that 'The mother who seeks grace for her child' was the reason behind the decision.¹⁹ Despite the fact that the Presidency actually responded to the demands of civil groups, they did not admit it in public; rather, they justified the decision in terms of Galijasevic's mother's demand. However, this case was a victory for organized active groups over established forces with a legal right to use violence.

When the other leader, Hasan Delic, was arrested in May 1989 and held at the local prison in Maglaj, public protests took a different form. Cynics might see it as proof of an actual defeat of civil society, but the 'Delic arrest' was followed by different kinds of protests and demands. The human rights issue became secondary to the ethnic political divisions present at the time at federal level. Delic's fellow villagers organized protest but they had no support from the local population of the town. The reason for this was that it was also the occasion of the first nationalist protest in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although the villagers were Moslems, the nationalism was Serbian.

Milosevic secured his grip on power with popular support in the Serb dominated republics of Yugoslavia and he managed to install his own supporters as leaders in Serbia and Montenegro. The pattern was established for staging mass demonstrations against the bureaucracy of the leadership. Hence, his coup was commonly termed the 'Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution'. The 'marriage' between Milosevic's communist regime and Serbian nationalists was based on common interests. Milosevic's power was stronger and gave the impression that he was supported by the masses, while former nationalist dissidents gained

influence in policy. Milosevic's policy became more nationalist, while the nationalists became more involved in official institutions. Hence, their importance and influence.

Some of them, most notably Dobrica Cosic, were also human rights activists. With the rise of nationalism in Serbia, his influence grew and many troubled individuals sought support and contacts through Cosic and his circle. Thus, stories of persecution made it into the press and were introduced to a wider audience. Cosic did not only help Serbian nationalists, even Izetbegovic and his group sought his support in 1983. Whether it was due to a concern for human rights or the chance to challenge the regime in Sarajevo (very likely both), in 1989 the villagers of Mosevac were firmly supported by Belgrade. By then, it was not the support by some dissident group, but, as explained, by very influential people in the regime.

The Sarajevo leadership, meanwhile, refused to permit any attempt by Serb nationalists to stage a meeting in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, the Mosevac protest was an ideal excuse for 'professional anti-bureaucrats' to check the strength of the regime in Bosnia-Herzegovina. People who attended most of the meetings in support of Milosevic throughout the eastern parts of Yugoslavia came in two buses to stage a meeting. The irony was that Delic and Galijasevic were both Moslems. The only Bosnian community to cooperate with the cause was the small town of Velika Kladusa, where Agrokomerc was based. They also staged protests against the republic's leadership, and needed allies. To add to the irony of the situation, Velika Kladusa was also an overwhelmingly Moslem town.

During the spring and summer of 1989, both communities staged several protests and travelled to Sarajevo and Belgrade to seek justice and support for their cause. Their demands grew and they sought the resignation of the republic's government. However, somewhere along the way they lost sight of their original cause and there was less public sympathy for them. In the end, they almost managed to antagonize the Bosnian public because of the way they flirted with the nationalists in Serbia. At least nobody in public supported the protests as long as the police hesitated to use force against the protesters. The journalists were even less sympathetic towards them, since they encountered intimidation during their visits to Velika Kladusa and Mosevac. These protests were politically motivated, although it remained unclear what political platform was behind them. It is likely that in both cases they sprang from a combination of dissent towards the ruling system and popular support for beleaguered local leaders.

Different kinds of protests also took place in some other communities, but they were still not political. Protest arose in Zenica and Tuzla, main Bosnian industrial towns, where almost all metallurgy plants and chemical industries were based and were heavily polluting the environment. On 18 January 1989 around 40 citizens took to Zenica's streets to protest against the pollution. They even went to the local radio and government buildings to protest. A day later, the local Socialist Alliance organized an even larger meeting to demand better protection and concrete measures to prevent high pollution.²⁰ They would not

have organized such a meeting if the initiative had not come from outside the party ranks. Nobody had dared to protest against pollution in the past, the changes in society had had an effect. Something similar happened at the end of the month in Tuzla. These examples bore similarities with the emergence of dissent in the Baltic republics of the then Soviet Union, where the first demonstrations also were based on environmental issues.

It is clear that the first appearances of different views in society were based on non-political issues. The students' organizations were followed by human rights committees and public demonstrations against pollution. The regime's reaction was different in urban centres, especially in the capital, to that in rural communities. Therefore, it was logical that the next step, the formation of political organizations, took place in urban Bosnia-Herzegovina. The first news that a new political party was to be established came from an unexpected source in Zenica, in central Bosnia. It was alleged that the New Communist Party of Yugoslavia [Nova komunistička partija Jugoslavije] and the Independent Workers Unions [Nezavisni sindikati] had been founded. Journalists and the police tried to trail the organizations and their members, but it turned out to be the 'one-man-show' of a retired eccentric. When journalists from the Slovene magazine *Mladina* finally met Branko Tuco on 23 December 1987, they quickly found out it was a trap. The police arrested the self-proclaimed founder and fined journalists for the alleged offence of taking illegal photographs of industrial plants.²¹ That was the only crime the police dared to pin on the journalists.

Tuco's example shows the popular dissatisfaction with the affairs within the League of Communists. The party, although in big trouble, was still controlling the lives of ordinary people, who were not allowed to take serious political action on their own. They were certainly not permitted to set up a party, even though it was supposed to be a communist one. Regardless of the fact that, in the end, there was neither a party nor a syndicate, the 'founder' spent some time in prison. The elite had never been so shaken, but at the end of 1987 the system was still too strong for new political ideas, especially those developed by individuals.

Bosnia-Herzegovina lagged behind not only eastern and central Europe, but also the rest of Yugoslavia. At the time, when the communists already competed with opposition in Hungary and Tadeusz Mazowiecki became the first non-communist Prime Minister in eastern Europe, there was still only one political party in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Yugoslavia, some signs of a multiparty life appeared and the Slovene Peasants' Alliance, the first non-communist-founded political organization in Yugoslavia, was set up in May 1988. Their example was followed by dozens of other organizations in Slovenia and Croatia.

They still hesitated to use the term 'party' in their titles but, according to their programmes and activities, they were real political parties. The fear of repression was still high among these groups, but they did not wait for the communists' approval of their activity, which came a year later. The situation in 'western' parts of Yugoslavia seemed dangerous for the ruling communists in Bosnia-Herzegovina and this is why they tried to prevent the spread of such influence,

from Slovenia in particular. The method of officially allowing such activities but unofficially preventing the organizers from finding a place for meetings was common during this period.

A number of parties set up in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia had an ethnic dimension as their main feature. This could be another reason why Bosnian society was behind at this stage. Therefore, the foundation of the first Yugoslav political organization apart from the Communist Party was very important for a multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative [Udruženje za jugoslavensku demokratsku inicijativu, UJDI] was set up in Zagreb on 10 January 1989, but they were not allowed to register officially until autumn 1989. However, they were very active while awaiting permission. A branch of the association in Bosnia-Herzegovina was established soon after the Zagreb meeting. Many respected intellectuals joined the UJDI, making the association a brainstorming body that advocated political change and democracy.

Although their work was very important and won a lot of media coverage, they never enjoyed popular support. The UJDI had a limited appeal, mainly to intellectuals. However, their activities gained more freedoms for society than all the ethnic politicians, who still kept quiet in 1989. The policy of UJDI was obviously to gain democratic control over governing bodies and not to participate in power. This was the typical behaviour of a failed, liberal elite. They did not manage to organize themselves into a strong political movement, their methodology was not attractive to ordinary citizens and the problems they addressed were not of great concern to people who were already forced by the stream of events to look for ethnic, rather than civil, political ideas.

Liberal intellectuals were anticipating a multiparty system, as were many nationalists. Only a few nationalists, though, participated in setting up the first opposition movements. The Green Movement [Pokret zelenih] was initiated by professors and students at the Law Faculty in Sarajevo, in early July 1989. The leaders were liberal intellectuals who, apart from their concern for ecology and environmental issues, used this as the first legal, noncommunist, organized movement. Later, the Founding Assembly of the Green Movement was officially attended by 88 people, and was another provocation against the establishment. After the death of Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito, at the age of 88, the communists organized a number of silly activities for his commemoration under bizarre titles, such as '88 Roses for Comrade Tito', '88 New Members of the League of Communists' and '88 Young Trees for Comrade Tito'. Almost every gardening project was devoted to the memory of Broz. The announcement of 'The Greens' referred to this.

Among the first individuals to join the movement were some who later became nationalist leaders, such as the future Serbian leader, Radovan Karadzic, and the future top Moslem official Muhamed Kresevljakovic who later became Mayor of Sarajevo. At that time, they did not have the courage to set up any political opposition within their own ethnic groups, nor was there a strong basis for such initiatives, and they did not play a great role within the movement. This

was especially the case with Karadzic who only attended the founding session. Alongside the liberal-minded intellectuals who organized the movement and a handful of future nationalists, a very important role was played by those communists who were still within the political establishment, but were opposing many of its rules and publicly supported new ideas. There were even a few members of the Central Committees, at both a federal and republic level.

By the middle of 1989 there were still no attempts to organize ethnic political organizations and there was nothing to anticipate the rise of ethnic politics in 1990. Some activities of the HDZ in western Herzegovina were restricted to the secret preparations of small groups whose efforts only became public knowledge retrospectively. Serbian nationalism was manifested only by occasional incidents; there was no organization to support the perpetrators. Izetbegovic was freed from prison at the end of 1988 and enjoyed anonymity outside his religious circles. In general, there were no signs of the ethnic politics that would dominate the political scene in Bosnia-Herzegovina less than a year later.

REACTION OF THE RULING PARTY

The Communist Party was forced to make efforts to reform in order to keep hold of power. Although one could argue that they brought about their own demise by abusing power, there were some achievements in terms of the emerging civil society. Despite all its limitations, civil society presented a real threat to the once monolithic system. The Yugoslav sociologist, Vladimir Goati, has put forward the following analysis:

The creation of autonomous political institutions became a critical threat to the monistic system and its integrative ideology (i.e., the dictatorship of proletariat, class struggle, the leading role of the Communist party, etc.). In the course of 1988 and 1989, the ruling Communist party, the SKJ, tried for tactical reasons to preserve the existing political system by advocating 'pluralising from within'.²²

This meant an acceptance by the elite of different political ideas, albeit within a one-party system. Once these differences were admitted and permitted, a struggle began between radical reformers and diehard communists. Pressure from the emerging civil society might have been to the advantage of both factions, despite the fact that it should naturally help the reformers. An argument put forward by the new Minister of Internal Affairs, Muhamed Besic, shows how the hardliners used civil society to their own advantage. He told the republic's parliament about those forces that would favour a multiparty system: Their intentions to change the system of socialist democracy and political pluralism into a multiparty system have never been so clear.²³

This statement should be explained further for a proper understanding of its meaning. It acknowledged the factual situation but it was also a strong accusation

against a liberal faction within the League because the ruling ideology was still untouchable, and those who were accused of ruining it were understood to be enemies of the system. Thus the appearance of the civil society was used by hardliners to weaken the position of reformers as it was not popular yet to argue openly against the system as such. Some ruling people and some methods had changed, but the ideology remained absolutely the same.

One of the most massive research projects conducted in the former Yugoslavia, in every republic and province, polled 17,000 people. They all had to respond to the statement: 'The SKJ should be only one of the parties on the political scene.' Acceptance of the statement meant support for the multiparty system. Only one-quarter of citizens in Bosnia-Herzegovina agreed, that is, 25.6 per cent, while 22.1 per cent were undecided.²⁴ A better response came from Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro and Vojvodina, but one should bear in mind the timing of the research. Bosnia-Herzegovina was still ruled by the hardliners during 1986 and 1987. Therefore, fear of repercussions could be one of the reasons for the response. The other possible explanation could be that the public had not yet learned about the widespread corruption among the higher ranks of the party. A clash between the highest ranks was something unthinkable, at least at the beginning of the Agrokomerc scandal, and the public remained relatively quiet. The other scandal, the Neum case, changed the general attitude towards the system. Although he did not talk about Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular, Gellner's view clearly outlines the pattern of its politics: 'When the nomenklatura killed each other and accompanied the murderous rampage with blatantly mendacious political theatre, belief survived; but when the nomenklatura switched from shooting each other to bribing each other, faith evaporated.'²⁵

Gellner's view could be regarded as the closest explanation of popular beliefs in totalitarian systems. It also explains a low level of popular support for the multiparty system. However, by 1989, it seems that 'faith evaporated' and changes became more common, despite the fact that every party in power for a long period becomes resistant towards change of any kind. This meant that changes were forced upon the Communist Party.

The best example is a visit of some of the leading political and cultural reformers who built up a strong civil society in Slovenia. After the visit was delayed numerous times, because of a 'lack of space for the meeting' or 'problems with electricity', it finally took place in April 1988 and 'Omladinski Radio Sarajevo' broadcast interviews with the participants from Slovenia. However, the managers of Radio-Television Sarajevo condemned the programme and punished two journalists who reported on the event. This decision was published a year later in a newspaper: 'The journalists did not respect the concept of RTV Sarajevo [that is, the attitude of officials from Bosnia-Herzegovina towards Slovenia] since the journalists did not distance themselves from the interviewees' statements.'²⁶

Officials also did not like programmes featuring the music and ideas of the Slovene rock group, 'Laibach' (German name for Ljubljana), which the communists accused of having a pro-Nazi image. The significance of the achievements in civil society and the very real changes in politics could be seen in the fact that 'Laibach' staged three concerts in Sarajevo during the next year. Changes in the attitude to different ideas were a consequence of the diminishing power of top officials. The various scandals caused huge personnel changes which, in turn, meant weaker rule. The change of political patrons was quickly followed by changes in their clients, who were the protectors of a uniform ideology in the Bosnian media.

Changes in the editorial boards of Radio-Television Sarajevo were made together with changes in the ruling elite. New editorial staff were freely elected by journalists at Radio-Television Sarajevo. The communist officials no longer dared to appoint editors and managers against the wishes of employees. Programmes changed significantly and editors enjoyed freedom. Some programmes which already existed under the title of 'Youth Programme' [Omladinski Program] found new space and were no longer understood as 'non-serious'.²⁷

Meanwhile, similar changes occurred at the official daily newspaper *Oslobodjenje*. Revolutionary changes took place without revolutionary methods. Media lords had been almost as powerful as politicians, ordering the news and directing propaganda. Once they were forced to leave, a power vacuum appeared. After years of bans on any attempt at journalistic professionalism, suddenly everything was allowed. However, although the changes were of a revolutionary character, it has to be remembered that these developments were largely confined to the capital. The same steps were not taken in the provinces. Even big centres like Banja Luka and Tuzla continued to be ruled by hardliners and the local media gained very little from these significant changes.

Despite the changes that resulted from the weakening communist hold on power, and growing public demands, many dogmatic forms remained. Even the new men in power were in fact from the 'old school of totalitarian government'. The main difference lay in circumstances that no longer allowed a strong and unchecked rule. The new leaders were from the second echelons of the Communist Party and basically they supported the same ideology as their corrupted, and subsequently sacked, predecessors. Simply, their vision was a 'Titoism without Tito'. While former leaders had created and pursued this policy with plenty of ambition, the new ones were only the executives of an already failed vision. A well-known Sarajevan poet and human rights activist, Abdulah Sidran, described the new rulers as follows: 'Ideologists and leaders of the recent past were replaced with the executors, operators of their will; that desirable and artless class of politicians of general practice to whom it was not at heart, even when they had a wish and a will, to change their mental complex.'²⁸

Thus, the reactions of the communists were forced upon them and many of the benefits of civil society were often a consequence of a rather chaotic situation in

the communist ranks. The limits of the appeal of civil society enabled the ruling party to gain the space and time to try to reorganize themselves and keep their hold on power. During this period, the last sackings and resignations from the ruling ranks took place.²⁹ Thus, a powervacuum was created during this interval and some reform-minded communists rose in the party ranks. The significance of their rise was not only in strengthening the reformers' faction, but also in the fact that many of them had been regarded as dissidents at some stage in their careers. Zdravko Grebo was elected into the Federal Central Committee with the highest number of votes, which proved his popularity. Nijaz Durakovic took over the leadership of the party in Bosnia-Herzegovina, while Nenad Kecmanovic was the leading candidate to become a member of the Federal Presidency. Although party members, they had occasionally expressed more or less different views from official policy.

Durakovic was elected in 1989, but it was a year later than expected. In 1988, members of the party and local organizations showed massive support for Nijaz Durakovic to become the new leader. The rules demanded that the party Presidency elect the leader. At the meeting, all members supported Durakovic's candidacy but after secret ballots there was only one vote for him and ten for another candidate, much older than Durakovic and actually from the party's old second echelon.³⁰ This example shows that the old guard were still able to influence policy, though unable to install themselves at the top. It was only in 1989 that the more liberal-minded were able to take over some positions.

The Federal Central Committee had 11 new members after those involved in the scandals in Bosnia-Herzegovina had been forced to resign. Some other high-ranking officials resigned from their posts at their own decision. This was a sign of personal disappointment and of the deep crisis at the top of the political hierarchy. Raif Dizdarevic, the current Federal President, resigned from the party function and refused to be re-elected to the Federal Presidency. Therefore, a new President had to be found. This time it was the turn of a Serb from Bosnia-Herzegovina to take up the post. Because of growing democratic attitudes, three names instead of one were presented as final candidates. The others received less support from political organizations and were taken off the list.³¹ According to the newspapers at the time, Nenad Kecmanovic was the favourite, that is, he enjoyed the most support from the political organizations involved.

In April 1989, when it already seemed that Kecmanovic would inevitably be nominated to the Federal Presidency, the remnants of the old guard persuaded him to withdraw his candidacy. Secret-police files suggested that Kecmanovic was not only Vice Chancellor (Rector) of Sarajevo University and one of the new liberals, but also allegedly an informer for British Intelligence.³² A deal was made between the ruling politicians in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kecmanovic: he would get a diplomatic post if he withdrew his candidacy. All these schemes were revealed by the journalists of Omladinski Radio Sarajevo and *Valter* magazine.

The consequence was public outrage, even in official institutions and not only from the recently elected liberals, which was reflected in voices raised against

the methods of the secret police. Even the older generations wanted it clear: if Kecmanovic was a spy, it had to be proved. Otherwise the secret police were responsible for breaching their procedures. It is an irony that, in the end, secret policemen publicly protested against the heavy criticism against them and demanded respect for their service.³³ Heavy criticism of the secret police became common both in the press and in public institutions. The policemen lodged their complaint in a letter:

The 'Kecmanovic Case' was used as a motive. Hence we ask ourselves more often who in this country wants us not to confront the work of foreign intelligence services and who wants them to know more about us than we know about them.³⁴

The Kecmanovic case was revealed on 8 April and only heavy public pressure prevented the naming of one of the remaining two candidates as a new member of the Federal Presidency. In fact, one of the candidates, Stevo Mirjanic, did not have sufficient support from all the political organizations in the elections for the republic's government that had just been held. He was, therefore, not likely to be elected for any post by the republic's parliament. Thus, the only favourite was Milan Skoro, a typical member of the old, communist, upper ranks, who was expected to be elected on 11 April.

Media gains achieved in the previous period and the emerging civil society, in the form of organized student and human rights groups, enabled society to influence the state. On this occasion, one day before the Parliament's session, students at the Faculty of Political Science in Sarajevo, led by their Dean, Gajo Sekulic, demanded a different outcome. They wanted all the accusations against Kecmanovic to be dropped and the whole election process to be repeated. The Forum for the Protection of Human Rights and Liberties was based at the faculty where students gathered on the morning of 11 April, awaiting Parliament's decision. They threatened to march to the Parliament if the new member of the Federal Presidency was elected. It seems that they had a great deal of influence on the delegates in Parliament. Thus, for the first time, delegates in the Parliament did not vote as they were supposed to and, as a sign of their disagreement, most of the votes were invalid.³⁵ The delegates of the youth organization were even officially ordered by the youth leadership not to vote for any of the candidates. The electoral procedure had to be repeated, but there was no time. Thus, the republic would be without its representative in the highest federal body for over two months.

The Parliament's decision on 11 April set a precedent for many local councils. Whenever delegates were unhappy they would cast invalid votes and effectively prevent a decision that was against their wishes. This practice happened immediately afterwards in the districts of Banja Luka, Ilijas and Pale, which were left without an elected mayor.³⁶ It was an irony that civil society achieved influence over state institutions but also prevented the work of councils and

assemblies. The necessity for radical changes was omnipresent, but the system had been built up in such a way as to prevent the changes with long and very complicated procedures. Hence, some 'political euphemisms' were invented.

When the elections for the member of the Federal Presidency were announced, they were called a plebiscite because there was no space in the law for elections with more than one candidate. The main significance of this case was that had it happened only one year earlier, it would never have been revealed. This time, it was not only a matter of journalists' personal courage, but also of the changed situation within society. New forms of civil activity made it possible to reveal 'secret' information. Furthermore, citizens were not afraid to protest and demand to hear the truth and a right to choose. The old regime stayed in power but was forced to change the rules to such an extent that elections were called and some kind of electoral campaign was conducted, through media interviews with all the candidates for the position. Thus, this event marked the beginning of a quasidemocracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Pledges to democratic principles were heard everywhere and practice changed significantly, but there was still a single-party system.

The first semi-free elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina were organized on 25 June 1989. About 70 per cent of legitimate voters made their choice from five candidates. The turnout varied in the communities. The highest was in Hadzici (90.2 per cent) and the lowest in Posusje (39.1 per cent).³⁷ Although Posusje is a small town in western Herzegovina with a population that is almost entirely Croat, one cannot make judgements on an ethnic basis. Even some communities with a large Serb population or majority witnessed a low turnout: in Mrkonjic Grad it was 49.3 per cent, while the turnout in Bratunac, Rudo and Sipovo was just over 50 per cent.³⁸ Bogic Bogicevic, a younger and relatively liberal member of the new communist leadership, who built his career in the youth organizations, won the elections. The runner-up was Dragan Kalinic.

Bogicevic and Kalinic were both Serbs, as were all the other candidates, as this was part of a careful policy of ethnic equality and the position was intended for a member of this ethnic community. The difference in the choice can be seen in their later careers. Bogicevic's vote in the Federal Presidency against military action in Croatia in 1991 was crucial. He remained in Sarajevo during the war as a member of the reformed former communists, the Social Democratic Party. Kalinic joined the Serb leadership during the war and afterwards became president of the hardline Serbian Democratic Party. In 1989, however, one could hardly notice a major political difference expressed in public between the two as they were both from the higher communist ranks.

This election was the first step towards proper democratic procedures. Even the institutional organizations started to accept the inevitability of political pluralism. The Socialist Alliance of Working People organized discussions among intellectuals and politicians about the future direction of politics. The conclusion was that some kind of political pluralism should be allowed and, furthermore, that movements outside the 'socialist umbrella' should be allowed

to exist. This view was against the Federal Presidency's statement of 2 March 1989, in which a multiparty system was denounced as unconstitutional.³⁹ By the time of the announcement many alliances, movements and parties had already been formed throughout Yugoslavia, though the majority were in Slovenia.

There was still no direct action in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The activists of the newly founded civil organizations were very much present in public life and the media, but one could question their real influence over the ordinary population, especially outside Sarajevo. The population in general seems to have been more concerned with economic and other problems, at the time, than with prospects of real democracy.

An inert population allowed delays in further reforms. The majority of top officials in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Yugoslavia in general, were still against a multiparty system. The discussions in the Central Committees uncovered support for a 'pluralism of social interests', but not for a pluralism of political parties. They suggested that all kinds of different ideas should be discussed in the Socialist Alliance and directed through that organization. It was the last attempt to preserve the monopoly of power held by the communists since the Second World War. Nothing radical was changed in the last constitutional reform in April 1989, which passed rather quietly because of the Kecmanovic case. The situation in Yugoslavia was not to the advantage of the hesitant leadership in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The head of the Federal Youth, a Slovene, Branko Greganovic, was radical in describing the state of affairs in Yugoslavia:

Yugoslavia has yet to be constituted as a state in a sense of the rule of parliament that never existed. The existence and life of Yugoslavia was based on the system of atomised authorities. They do not cease to exist at a lower level. It is possible to find a squire and an authority in every part of life and human activity... When the crisis reaches the supreme authority there is a breakdown of the system.⁴⁰

One critic saw the immediate future as 'either a military rule like in Poland [in recent past] or a multiparty system'.⁴¹ Multiparty elections were promised in Slovenia and the political scene there was characterized by ever more demands for Slovene independence. Croatia was several steps behind, but democracy was also on its way there. The media campaign from Serbia and the policy exercised by Milosevic were on the other side of Yugoslav politics. It was ever more obvious that any kind of agreement at a federal level was impossible. Therefore, those in favour of democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina were also stressing its sovereignty.

A group of five intellectuals issued a demand to the republic's parliament to legalize the freedom of the press and political activity. Zdravko Grebo, Tarik Haveric, Ivan Lovrenovic, Desimir Medjovic and Miodrag Zivanovic were well known in public and their views were often acknowledged in the highest forums, where some of them sat, including on the Central Committee. They were of

different ethnic origins and one could not find any ethnic basis in their work. Their demands got the support of 14 delegates at the Tenth Congress of the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is symptomatic that a loud reaction was provoked by their initiative and some even suggested the arrest of those who had signed it. In the end, there were no arrests and the initiative was accepted, although in a slightly changed form.⁴² There would be no direct action in accordance with the initiative, but the communists promised to work on it in their own communities.

In fact, nothing changed. The party could afford some showcases as a sign of their changed policy, such as paying the state television to broadcast congress sessions and prepare propaganda, even though the TV chief admitted it could still be ordered by the Central Committee.⁴³ As late as summer 1989, the party initiated discussions on whether party cells should remain in the work place. Opinion was divided, and it showed that an indefinite split of the party was almost inevitable. The old-fashioned could not agree with the liberal-minded.

The initiators of a multiparty system in Bosnia-Herzegovina found a basis for their demands in the basic document of Bosnian-Herzegovinian statehood. They wisely argued that according to the decisions of ZAVNOBiH, the highest wartime body in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a multiparty system was not forbidden at all. ZAVNOBiH was the partisan-organized assembly of patriotic forces during the Second World War. As the ZAVNOBiH decisions were the basis for communist rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina, this argument was a powerful attack on communist power. This event shows the real position of the League of Communists, which had a strong liberal opposition within itself. Although the party's top officials were of a younger generation, they did not support, at least openly, the kind of ideas proposed by relatively independent intellectuals around the party's mainstream.

Developments and events in the rest of the communist states created little reaction in Bosnian political life. Politicians were preoccupied with their own problems. Discussions in the media were concerned with big economic problems in the state and political divisions in the Federation along ethnic lines. Reforms and changes in Slovenia and some other republics certainly had a major influence over Bosnian society, but this was restricted to the capital and a few urban centres. These were also the limits of civil society. The rise of nationalism in Serbia bore more weight and was a subject of many discussions and interpretations. Nationalist influence coming from neighbouring republics was not limited, unlike civil society, and appealed easily to the population, especially outside the major urban communities.

NOTES

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
4. Keane, J., *Civil Society and the State* (London: Verso, 1988), p. 35.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
6. Giddens, A., *The Nation State and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985), pp. 308–15.
7. Vejvoda, I., 'Politics and Modernity Without Democracy', in *Europe and The Balkans: How They View Each Other*, vol. 1 (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1996), p. 1.
8. Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence*, p. 271.
9. Borowiec, A., *Yugoslavia After Tito* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 6.
10. Petrovic, D., research interview, June 1996.
11. Circulation of both magazines was around 50,000 at the end of 1988; *Nasi dani* achieved a circulation of 100,000 during 1989. Sančanin, M., research interview, April 1996.
12. *Prelom*, Banja Luka, December 1989–January 1990, p. 3.
13. See Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty*, p. 193.
14. Borowiec, *Yugoslavia After Tito*, p. 8.
15. Kasapovic, M., 'The Structure and Dynamics of the Yugoslav Political Environment and Elections in Croatia', in J.Seroka and V.Pavlovic (eds), *The Tragedy of Yugoslavia: The Failure of Democratic Transformation* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1992), p. 31.
16. Article 133 of the Yugoslav Criminal Code prosecuted incidents of 'hostile propaganda', under which every single newspaper article could have been described.
17. Mujagic, Mustafa, *Vjesnik* correspondent, claimed so in a series of reports in *Vjesnik* during the second half of January 1989.
18. Pajic, Z., research interview, June 1996.
19. *Vjesnik*, 28 January 1989, p. 5.
20. *Vjesnik*, 20 January 1989, pp. 1–5.
21. *Vjesnik*, 30 December 1987, p. 12; first published in *Oslobodjenje* on 27 December 1989.
22. Goati, V., 'The Challenge of Post-Communism', in Seroka and Pavlovic (eds), *The Tragedy of Yugoslavia*, p. 6.
23. Besic, Muhamed, at the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 21 March 1989; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
24. See Goati, 'The Challenge of Post-Communism', p. 7.
25. See Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty*, p. 41.
26. *Polet*, Zagreb, 29 September 1989, p. 20.
27. Omladinski Radio Sarajevo was listened to by 800,000 people according to the surveys made by RTV Sarajevo. It was the company's second most popular programme after the Bosnian folk music programme; Sančanin, M., research interview, April 1996.
28. *Borba*, 13 May 1989, p. 6.
29. The Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina on 22 February 1989 and the Central Committee of SKJ on 30 January 1989 and 17 February 1989; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
30. Kecmanovic, Nenad, in *Borba*, 17 April 1989, p. 3.

31. Session of the Socialist Alliance Conference on 17 February 1989; TV Sarajevo broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
32. Interview with Nenad Kecmanovic in October 1990; Omladinski Radio Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
33. Letter of the secret-police workers on 25 April 1989; Omladinski Radio Sarajevo and TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
34. *Danas*, weekly, 2 May 1989, p. 31.
35. Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 11 April 1989; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
36. *Tanjug* (Yugoslav news agency) news on 14 April 1989; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
37. *Borba*, 27 June 1989, p. 1. 1.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
39. Tanjug quoted this announcement from the Federal Presidency session 2 March 1989; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
40. *Oslobodjenje*, 22 March 1989, p. 4.
41. Puhovski, Zarko, in *Borba*, 27 May 1989 p. 11.
42. TV Sarajevo broadcast tapes of the Tenth Congress of the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina (private collection n/a).
43. Pejic, Nenad, editor-in-chief of TV Sarajevo, in *Borba* 11 December 1989, p. 3.

The Rise of Nationalism and the Communists

After 1991 and the subsequent wars, all one could think of was nationalism and re-reading the sources in search of evidence. Nationalism and ethnic issues were important to the communists who were aware of their existence. They had ways of dealing with nationalism and were very sensitive in their approach. However, although important, on the whole nationalism was not the main issue in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The change came with the rise in power of Slobodan Milosevic in neighbouring Serbia. Therefore, by 1989, nationalism was still not a major issue in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but the first incidents started to appear in public and even among the once monolithic leadership. Ethnic divisions, however, were not in existence at the time, although the leaders were well aware of the possible danger. In a statement, issued by the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina on 20 February 1989, they said in an old communist fashion: 'Internal enemies are joining forces on nationalistic basis and act as inter-connected. The aims are attacks on the constitutional order and divisions on ethnic basis. They are helped by reactionary circles from the country and from abroad.'¹

THE YUGOSLAV CONTEXT

The rise of nationalism in Serbia profoundly influenced the rest of Yugoslavia. The decision to impose direct rule from Belgrade over the southern Serbian province of Kosovo, where the overwhelming majority of the population was Albanian, affected all Yugoslav republics. Ivo Banac described the cause of the catastrophic events in Yugoslavia: The cancer that has eaten at the entrails of Yugoslavia since Tito's death can be recognized—without a great margin of error—as having Kosovo for its locus.'² Even Serbian nationalists saw the beginning of the whole process in Kosovo, albeit from a different angle. Thus Nikola Koljevic claims, 'When we speak about Yugoslavia, it is clear that the so called ethnic cleansing started in Kosovo and exactly from the ranks of one ethnic minority in a multiethnic state.'³

The perpetual question of the Yugoslav crisis was Kosovo. Its status as an autonomous province within Serbia and the Federation was underlined in the Constitution of 1974. Serbia accepted its position because, as Dejan Jovic claims, '...it was in accordance with its perception of Serbian national interests

seen at the time by the Serbian political elite'.⁴ The change came in the mid-1980s when this national doctrine was gradually replaced by the doctrines of two influential men in Belgrade. Dobrica Cosic was the foremost leader of Serbian national consciousness and Slobodan Milosevic was a rising star in Serbian politics. The combination of the two mutual interests, economic crisis, quiet popular dissent and the crisis in the system and the Federation, gave rise to both doctrines and, as a consequence, the Serbian political attitude changed.

Milosevic suddenly became the first of the Yugoslav leaders during the post-Tito period to enjoy popular support which was manifested in mass meetings in Serbia. The process had started in April 1987 in Kosovo, when he had promised protection to the local Serbs. 'No one will beat you again' was a sound bite that attracted support.⁵ As Mark Thompson commented: 'Husbanding his appearances, he barked simple martial speeches to rapturous masses who waved banners, cried "Serbia has risen!", sang "Who says Serbia is small?" and so forth. He turned Serbs everywhere into his constituents.'⁶ Ivo Banac's description of the meetings and slogans gives an even clearer picture of Milosevic's rise:

Milosevic's take-over came on the wings of a growing cult of personality ('Serbia is only asking, when will Sloba replace Tito'; 'Sloba, Serbian, Serbia is with you'; 'Slobodan, say when, we shall fly like bullets'), media manipulation, and a campaign to brutalize Albanians.⁷

All the slogans were popular rhymes and therefore they presented even stronger expressions when used at mass gatherings. The meetings proved to be too much of a pressure for his opponents within the Serbian elite and he successfully purged the leadership in Serbia, its two autonomous republics and Montenegro. It is also true that massive support for Milosevic did not come only on a wave of resurrected nationalism, but alongside signs of awaited changes. His propaganda machine successfully sold the term 'anti-bureaucratic revolution', as the leaders who did not follow him fell one after another. This was also the period of democratic revolutions else-where in communist Europe, where organized masses managed to change the system. Therefore, mass demonstrations carried by Serbian nationalism could have been seen, albeit incorrectly, as a movement for democracy. Michael Ignatieff's argument is important: 'Historically, nationalism and democracy have gone hand in hand. Nationalism, after all, is the doctrine that a people have a right to rule themselves, and that sovereignty reposes in them alone.'⁸ Hence some pro-democratic forces were clearly nationalistic, while others fell into the trap of mistaking the 'anti-bureaucratic' movement in Serbia for a democratic one. The long awaited solution to the general crisis of the system certainly encouraged some to admire Milosevic in the beginning and not to recognize the nationalistic force behind him. Misha Glenny, like many others, claims that Milosevic was: '...a man without passion, without any real nationalist motivation (although on the surface he appears to wallow in it)...'⁹

It is, however, irrelevant whether he is a devoted nationalist or just uses nationalism for political purposes. The fact is that Milosevic was the first to introduce nationalism into Yugoslav politics. He installed it in the highest ranks, sparked popular support which often, if not always, pressed for Serbian ethnic domination and thus challenged all the other leaders in Yugoslavia. Ignatieff's description of Milosevic's role, however, is far more based on facts than impressions:

Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic was the first Yugoslav politician to break the Titoist taboo on popular mobilization of ethnic consciousness. Milosevic portrayed himself both as the defender of Yugoslavia against the secessionist ambitions of Croatia and Slovenia and as the avenger of the wrongs done to Serbia by that very Yugoslavia.¹⁰

It would be wrong to conclude that the Serbs in general were more nationalistic and to demonize them for the consequent wars. They certainly have their portion of blame and it is the biggest portion since they were the biggest ethnic group in Yugoslavia and the first to raise nationalist rhetoric and demands. But others have their share in the cause of the problems, although one might regard the other nationalism as a response to a Serbian one. As Glenny rightly found in this case, This was a challenge to all other republics: their choice was to recognize Serbia's seniority within Yugoslavia and by implication the dominance of the Serbian-dominated unitarist state, or to respond with a nationalist agenda of their own.¹¹

Slovene communists had a strong ethnic consciousness. As the Slovenes lived mainly in Slovenia, which had a small minority population, there were no inter-ethnic troubles. The development of civil society and a push for democratic reforms that included human rights issues was equally important in this republic. Their support for the rights of suppressed Albanians in Kosovo made them the first arch-enemies for Serbs, all this despite the fact that there were no historical inter-ethnic grievances. The Slovene leadership, and public in general, openly supported the Albanians' protests and even staged a gathering of the Slovene elite in Ljubljana.¹²

Milosevic's response to Slovene concern over human rights in Kosovo was a mass meeting in Belgrade a day later, on 28 February 1989. Large crowds in front of the Federal Parliament building demanded arrests of those responsible for problems in Kosovo (presumably Albanians) and there were even some demands for weapons to be issued to the crowd (presumably Serbs). Milosevic promised not only a solution for Kosovo, according to the Serb nationalist doctrine, but also the arrest and punishment of Albanian leaders.¹³ Indeed, the forced resignations and arrests of some leading Albanian politicians, all communists, followed the meeting in Belgrade.¹⁴ Albanians and the police clashed on many occasions, with some casualties. A state of emergency was declared in Kosovo

and the federal army took control of the province. The Albanians were silenced for a while, but inter-republic relations suffered.

The Slovene launch of democratic reforms, therefore, along with a strong pro-Slovene commitment, became intolerable for Serbian leaders. An unofficial boycott of Slovene goods in Serbia was introduced during 1989. First, it was initiated by the media in Serbia, later it was made official. Glenny recognized the situation, The Slovene bureaucracy, under barely resistible pressure from an organized and exceptionally articulate opposition, was the first to rise to the challenge by issuing a trenchant attack on the repressive and centralist tendencies of the federal Yugoslav structures.¹⁵

What Glenny failed properly to explain was that, by the time of the political and economic conflict between the federal forces and the Slovenes, Milosevic's followers were already installed in the Federal Presidency and Parliament and were pursuing Serbian nationalist policy. Milosevic's original tactic was to change the leadership of each republic and province by staging mass protests in the capitals. This tactic succeeded in Vojvodina and Montenegro and, along with Kosovo, Milosevic controlled half of the Federation. He needed one more unit to enable him to dominate and control the whole of Yugoslavia. Slovenia was the first to challenge him. Milosevic's supporters attempted the proven tactics of staging another meeting. This time Ljubljana was supposed to be the site of an 'antibureaucratic revolution' through the 'Meeting of Truth'.¹⁶ In response, the Slovene authorities imposed a ban on any gathering in Slovenia on the official anniversary of Communist Yugoslavia—29 November 1989. Serbia then cut off all ties with Slovenia.

Thus Milosevic had already made two enemies. The first were the Albanians, who were stripped of political representation by the new Serbian Constitution.¹⁷ The second enemy became Slovenia, who politically opposed Milosevic's attempts to impose Serbian dominance in the Federation. Disputes between the communist parties of the republics were expressed openly from the moment Milosevic took over the Serbian party-organization. By 1989, every public appearance was used to show strength and popular support for one or other of the republican leaderships. At the celebration of the Battle of Kosovo, which had taken place in 1389, he organized the largest meeting ever. It was described as in the range of 300,000 people in the Croatian newspapers and up to 1.5 million in the Serbian media. Certainly, it was the largest meeting in Yugoslavia. Milosevic took the opportunity to earn more adoration within his nation when he announced, 'Six centuries later, today, we are again involved in battles. They are not armed battles though but these are not excluded.'¹⁸ This sentence was the first prediction, whether intentional or not, of later events in the country. It is an irony that Milosevic was extradited to the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague on the same date—28 June—12 years later. There were some further motives for an uneasy approach towards the Kosovo Battle. It was also celebrated outside Serbia in regions with significant Serb population. Serbian attention was moved from Slovenia to Croatia where the

stakes were different because of the number of Serbs living there. This meant that Milosevic's first attempt was to reorganize Yugoslavia and emerge as the supreme leader. After this failed, his efforts were directed towards uniting all the Serbs under his leadership. It was only in the summer of 1989, following the events described above, that the Serbs outside Serbia closed ranks behind Milosevic. Glenny found that:

At first, not even the Serb communities in Bosnia and Croatia invested any particular hopes in him. The Serb communities in Croatia, for example, have never felt any great sympathy for the situation of the Kosovo Serbs who were the main instrument which Milosevic used to attain power.¹⁹

Celebrations of the Battle of Kosovo throughout Yugoslavia provided Milosevic with a perfect excuse to demonstrate his power, to mobilize support and to reach those Serbs who were still outside the mainstream of Serbian nationalism. In Croatia, the main celebration was in the region of Knin, during which the first open demands were heard for a change in Yugoslavia's inter-republic borders, thus creating 'Greater Serbia'. Vojislav Seselj was selling his magazine of the same title at the celebration.²⁰ Croats and Serbs were further divided by the arrest of one of the self-proclaimed local Serb leaders in the region, Jovan Opacic. Dobrica Cosic, often described as the father of Serbian nationalism, immediately involved himself in organizing a petition for his release and also in intellectual discussions concerning the borders of Croatia. Because of his influence in Serbia, Cosic's views on border changes were a clear sign of what the Serbs' goals should be. They also alienated non-Serbs and gave grounds for more extremist views among other nationalists. Marcus Tanner described the implications of Cosic's interview with an Italian newspaper:

Cosic worsened the conflict by telling an Italian newspaper that Croatia had received the region of Istria unjustly. Tito had 'occupied Istria and given it to Croatia', he said. It was a dangerous precedent, openly suggesting that the borders of the republics settled under Tito were wrong... At the Serbian Writers' Club in Francuska Street [in Belgrade], there were calls for the Serbs in Croatia to be allowed an autonomous province.²¹

Ideas of this kind often started in intellectual circles, but soon ended up with peasants and common people fighting armed battles without really understanding their cause. The case of Serbian nationalism, and later that of other Yugoslav ethnic groups, certainly proves this point. Cosic was not the only one who discussed the question of borders. The imaginary borders of a 'Serbland' were also drawn by another pan-Serbian action, whereby the remains of the medieval Serb, Prince Lazar, were carried around regions throughout Yugoslavia with a significant Serb population, for more than a year. They were finally laid to rest

on 10 September 1989. The celebrations polarized the population further. One could understand this action as a marking of territory on which a claim was about to be put.

All these events contributed heavily to the first inter-ethnic incidents along the coastal area in Croatia during the summer holidays of 1989. Cars with Serbian registration plates were often demolished or hit with stones. Some houses owned by Serbs were even burnt down. It was certain, and natural, that after the renaissance of Serb nationalism, Croat nationalism would follow despite the careful policy of the communist leadership in Croatia. There are not many historical examples of the coexistence in power of nationalists and moderates from different ethnic groups in a multiethnic state. The rise of nationalism in one group is soon reflected in another.

IMPACT ON BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

The first public ethnic divisions within the leadership in Bosnia-Herzegovina appeared in 1989. Although they were on minor issues, they showed for the first time the existence of different ethnic perspectives within the leadership; hence their importance. The political divisions only reflected something that was already going on among the people. Images of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a unified country were alive only in Sarajevo and some of the other larger centres. The countryside and the smaller communities were already on their way to joining the main ethnic leaders at the federal level. These parts of society were the basis for ethnic politics and nationalism.

Serbian policy was rather aggressive towards Slovenia in the first instance and later towards Croatia. The relation with Bosnia-Herzegovina was officially marked as very good during the visit of the Serbian delegation to Sarajevo at the end of June 1989. However, the delegation from Slovenia had been in Sarajevo a few weeks earlier and the leadership of Bosnia-Herzegovina agreed with the Slovenes on all major issues, despite the fact that the Slovenes were in opposition to Serbian political views. It was a pattern of Bosnian policy to try to keep out of disputes both from the east and from the west. Serbs and Slovenes were engaged in a total political confrontation and the Sarajevo leadership agreed with both. Lack of determination, however, delayed what was needed—a clear decision on the direction in which Bosnian policy should go. The party lacked strength and experience. It also appeared that it was not as united as it had been during earlier periods.

Some of the leadership's discussions had repercussions among the people. Two members of the communist leadership in Sarajevo divided the membership with their opinion on the events in Serbia. Muhamed Abadzic and Fuad Muhic, both Moslems, provoked strong reactions in the provincial organizations. About 20 local committees demanded that the Central Committee express their opinion on both of their arguments because they were very critical of Milosevic's policy.²² Readers' letters in the main Bosnian daily newspaper, *Oslobodjenje*,

showed a division. Moslem readers supported their arguments, while the Serbs opposed them.²³ Kemal Kurspahic, an editor of *Oslobodjenje*, described the consequences:

Following the publication of the letters, the president of the Presidency of the [Central] Committee, Abdulah Mutapcic, called a meeting with the directors and editors of the republic's media and upbraided *Oslobodjenje*. 'I think that the publishing of these letters was an editorial mistake. The letters have nothing but Serbs attacking and Muslims defending Muhic and Abadzic!' That is not an editorial mistake but quite possibly a realistic picture of the situation, and ... we are showing how seriously nationalism has taken hold,' I answered ...²⁴

Kurspahic realistically critiqued present and anticipated future events, while the communists' leader showed how very little had changed in the Communist Party and how unprepared it was for the challenges of nationalism. Other proofs were to follow. In April 1989, at the meeting of the old war veterans in Banja Luka, Ahmed Dzubo, a member of the republic's leadership of war veterans, criticized the Belgrade daily newspaper *Politika*. One hundred out of the five hundred old partisans, mainly Serbs, who attended the meeting, protested because in their opinion, Dzubo, a Moslem, made *Politika* look like the Zagreb and Ljubljana weeklies, *Danas* and *Mladina*. In their opinion, the Slovene and Croatian press were anti-Yugoslav and unreliable, while the Belgrade media was to be believed. The meeting was abandoned because of the incident showing that even the old partisans, once united in the anti-nationalist struggle, had become ethnically divided.²⁵ The organization of the Banja Luka youth was similar. A branch in a large company demanded the resignations of the Parliament Speaker and the leader of the Socialist Alliance, both Moslems, as the majority of the population in Banja Luka was Serb.²⁶

The media played a great role in spreading nationalist doctrine, although the Sarajevo-based media did not side with nationalist tendencies. The irony was that the openness of Sarajevo's society actually enabled the media from the rest of Yugoslavia, at the time especially from Serbia, to spread the doctrine. The Sarajevo broadcast media was the only one in the Federation to broadcast the programmes of the other centres without hesitation. Their programme policy was to offer their viewers everything, and all political opinions from the different centres were given space. TV Zagreb gave up the common TV scheme after the constant 'bombardment' of accusations against the leadership in Croatia in TV Belgrade programmes. Prior to the culmination of the crisis, all the stations had a similar policy. Political changes in Bosnia-Herzegovina meant that local leaders had less influence, if any, while the scheme of cooperation with the others remained. TV Belgrade and TV Zagreb were no longer partners in good faith. As Mark Thompson has analysed:

In 1989, when Serbia's leadership succeeded in cancelling the regional autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, and in changing the leadership in Montenegro, TV Novi Sad, TV Pristina and TV Titograd were turned into mouthpieces of TV Belgrade, itself a mouthpiece of the Milosevic government. 'What we had at the beginning of 1990...was eight TV stations in which four worked as one, directed from one centre, and four others each covered its own territory.' ... The manipulation and breakdown of consensus in Yugoslav television foreshadowed a similar breakdown in the organs of federal government...²⁷

The print media could show divisions and influence over population even more clearly. This was pointed out in the federal newspaper, *Borba*:

The figures about the press circulation show that Zagreb press is read in the territories of Bosnia-Herzegovina populated mainly by Croats. Serbian press is read in those territories with mainly Serb population and in the regions where the majority is Moslem, domestic press from Bosnia-Herzegovina is read. To buy more than one daily is not a permissible luxury for most of the people.²⁸

The Belgrade-based daily, *Politika*, was a leader in spreading Serbian nationalism. Many authors point this out. Mark Thompson provides the deepest analysis of the media as a whole, but especially the one that initiated the ethnic hatred:

From 1987, *Politika* was swiftly monopolized by hate-and-fear-mongering articles about a growing roster of internal and external enemies (the Albanians of Kosovo and, later, the Croats, the Slovenians, the Bosnian Muslims, the Vatican and the CIA). The back pages of the paper, meanwhile, were 'given over to interminable obsessive features on Serbia's past: its battles, its dynasties, its unique sufferings'.²⁹

One could conclude, according to these cases, that nationalism was imported to Bosnia-Herzegovina from its neighbouring republics. This is true, but only to some extent. As explained earlier, the basis for spreading nationalism already existed in some Bosnian communities. Thus, there were two factors: one was orchestrated from Belgrade and another was semispontaneous in smaller, provincial communities. In the larger centres, meanwhile, although the intelligentsia was occupied with nationalist problems they had very little influence over events outside the major cities. A policy of discrediting non-supportive politicians went on for some time in the Serbian press. Some of them gave up politics altogether, while others withdrew for a while. In both cases, the Bosnian leadership was weakened and, thus, Serbian goals were achieved. There

were plenty of such cases. Old files were suddenly opened and used for new purposes.

Those who continued to fight nationalism in their own ethnic groups with the old communist doctrine, experienced public criticism concerning alleged incompetence. Andjelko Vasic, leader of the Federal Workers Union and a Serb from Tuzla, was attacked in the Serbian newspaper, *Politika*, for taking part in the persecution of some alleged Serb nationalists in eastern Bosnia during his hold on power in this region. All of the Yugoslav press was freely sold in Bosnia-Herzegovina and some had an even bigger circulation than local newspapers. *Politika*, as was already the case in Banja Luka and some other areas, enjoyed great respect and influence among the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was under Milosevic's complete control and those who were criticized in it were quickly stripped of their favour among many Serbs.

The message was clear: those who are not with us are against us—the enemy. Vasic 'deserved' enemy status, not because of his earlier role but because of his speech in Velika Kladusa, where he said that Serbs should fight their own nationalism in the first place and only afterwards, some other nationalism.³⁰ Hence, the beginning of a campaign from Serbia to discredit him. Vasic behaved in accordance with Bosnian leadership policy. After all, he was one of them. Support for him was not questioned within the highest party ranks, but he lost his influence over provincial Serbs and, as a result, could not be used for later political battles.

As the leadership in Sarajevo developed a policy aimed at underlining Bosnian sovereignty, the role of the media was important. While the Belgrade media was under Milosevic's total control and followed instructions by producing a number of articles attacking Bosnian policy, the Sarajevo-based media responded by defending sovereignty. As this was the policy of the leadership in Bosnia-Herzegovina, one could argue that both sides actually followed their leaders. But this would only be partially true, because the political elite in Sarajevo had not controlled the media since the scandals during the previous years. Therefore, the Sarajevo media mainly just followed events.

Eastern Bosnia was the reason for another, more serious, political and media confrontation. The Sarajevo media ran the story of the undercover work of Serbia's intelligence services in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which were illegal if they were conducted, as was the case, without the knowledge and approval of the Sarajevo authorities. Belgrade journalists immediately produced a number of articles suggesting that Serbs were fleeing eastern Bosnia because of policy favouring Moslems. The articles were so one-sided that they failed to notice the fact that some of the local rulers were Serbs and were denying the whole story. They even accused the leadership in Sarajevo of a pro-Moslem policy. Their favourite story was about how many Moslems were in top positions in the leadership in Bosnia-Herzegovina and how many editors of a Moslem ethnic background were in charge of the press in Sarajevo. What the Belgrade press forgot to mention in their accusations against the Sarajevo media, was that the

journalist who uncovered the affair, Vlastimir Mijovic, was in fact a Serb. But in the atmosphere of high nationalist feelings facts lost their value and the Bosnian media had little chance to influence an already decided Serbian readership.

Public discrediting was widespread in the Serbian media. However, some Bosnian media used similar strategies in the later stages of political developments. The Serb readership in Bosnia-Herzegovina was further antagonized by the Sarajevo tabloid, *As*. It published a list of those politicians and public persons who would support Milosevic's mass meetings in Bosnia-Herzegovina and eventually take power if he proved successful.³¹ The journalist did not sign his article, but several years later Senad Avdic admitted authorship.³² Those who were on the list thought it a very serious matter, while the editors claimed it was only a joke. Simply, it was very hard to retain credibility among non-Serbs for those who were marked as Milosevic's potential supporters. In this sense the article had some similarity with the campaign in Belgrade. Thus, although the system, somehow, still functioned and the leading communists in Bosnia-Herzegovina managed to prevent the spread of ethnic divisions to a great extent in their ranks, the basis was already laid for future divisions by the media's discrediting of some politicians.

One should also consider the general disappointment in the leadership and in the system in Yugoslavia. Even some high-ranking officials dared to state their critical opinion in public. They published articles as independent intellectuals, and not as leading officials. Thus Velimir Srica presented the problems in a Sarajevo newspaper:

There is so much brotherhood and unity around; every town has a square named after it. Nobody could harm us: we are defended by two hundred thousand fighters. Why worry about [the] unemployed; even those who are employed do not work. Why be bothered with inflation; it will be even higher. Why be concerned about the youth; they will get old anyway. I am an optimist.³³

The media tackled the problems in different ways. As all Yugoslav media was available in Bosnia-Herzegovina, they also influenced the readership there. There were not only Serbian and Croatian publications but also Slovene ones. The first open media challenge to the integrity of Yugoslavia came from the Ljubljana-based *Mladina* magazine. In March 1989 it published a map of a divided country. Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina constituted the 'United Republics of Western Yugoslavia' while, according to *Mladina*, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia made up the 'Socialist Federal Republic of Southern Yugoslavia'.³⁴ The names were carefully and wisely chosen to reflect the policies of the republics. The latter 'state' was, therefore, stuck with the old form of socialism and federalism concentrated around Serbia, while the western part was confederal. Public reactions were, accordingly, different in different parts of the country.

The top ranks of the party discussed the general situation and acknowledged a rise in nationalism, but remained stuck with an old, indirect approach that was hardly an adequate response to the changed circumstances. A typical reaction was that of the Minister of Internal Affairs, who said that 'nationalism is escalating—this is the greatest danger we are facing now'.³⁵ The leaders discussed and analysed issues in these general terms, trying not to offend anybody. They were still new to their positions, following the major clearance of the Bosnian political elite in the late 1980s.

Both the Parliament and the Central Committee in Sarajevo discussed nationalism as their main agenda at the beginning of spring 1989. However, these two institutions were not immune to the ethnic virus. One could even argue that after the first ethnic disagreements occurred among the politicians, the ordinary people started their crusades for their own ethnic cause. The plans of the nationalists were no secret: the Serbs would take some parts or the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina into Greater Serbia; Croat nationalists would do the same; and Moslem nationalists were accused of wanting a 'Moslem-Bosniak state in a confederation of Yugoslavia'.³⁶ The only problem was that nobody named the nationalists. All the talk was rather hypothetical. The system did not function any more and action was almost impossible. This provided a favourable context, together with the deep and long economic crisis, for the further rise and spread of nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The leader of the communists in the republic warned people of the possible consequences: 'If a soup of nationalism was cooked in Bosnia-Herzegovina, then the whole of Yugoslavia would have to eat it.'³⁷ Another member of the leadership put it a different way, but still on the lines of Durakovic's picturesque statement: 'One could not talk about the inter-ethnic confrontation. But to say that there are appearances of divisions between the people on ethnic lines—that is without any doubt.'³⁸ These statements show how the leadership responded to the actual situation in the republic. A confrontation along ethnic lines was already present in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but if the leaders had admitted that fact, they would actually have admitted their own failure to realize their policy of 'brotherhood and unity'. Nobody dared to question its achievements or, indeed, the policy. However, by 1989 it was obvious that the policy had failed or was not strong enough to fight nationalism. But the leaders in Sarajevo were stuck with it. Hence, the leadership's refusal to allow singleethnic meetings or to give any regard to celebrations of the Battle of Kosovo in Bosnia-Herzegovina was natural.

The Communist Party leadership in Sarajevo was now under double pressure. There was pressure from Serbia to stage meetings in Bosnia-Herzegovina to support fellow Serbs in Kosovo. It did not come from official institutions in Serbia, but from individuals and groups. However, they were supported in every sense by the Serbian communists. The other pressure came from within the republic, which was obviously divided on the question of the events in Kosovo. Therefore, the Sarajevo leaders asked local committees to support the leadership's decision not to allow the staging of any mass meetings in Bosnia-

Herzegovina. Within 48 hours all the district committees had returned their verdict, which was described as giving overwhelming support to the leadership. However, around 15 local committees, all with a Serb majority in their communities, were against the decision.³⁹ Thus, minor ethnic divisions appeared in the leadership in Sarajevo, but the major division was between the leaders in the Central Committee and members in the local authorities in the Serb-dominated districts. The ethnic issues were starting to become territorial.

A major celebration of the Battle of Kosovo was staged on 16 August on Mount Romanija in the village of Knezina, just north-east of Sarajevo. Festivities similar to the Kosovo Polje celebration (for the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo Polje, 1389) were repeated, but the leaders from the republican top echelons ignored the occasion. The only top politician from Bosnia-Herzegovina to send a message to the meeting in Knezina was Mirko Ostojic, a member of the Federal Presidency of the Socialist Alliance. This caused an angry discussion in the republic's Socialist Alliance during the summer of 1989. Rasim Kadic, the leader of the republic's youth organization, described Ostojic as a 'dark minded man who could not understand what Bosnia was'.⁴⁰ Kadic was a Moslem and Ostojic was a Serb, based in Sekovici in northern Bosnia. His town and the whole constituency was described in the magazine *Nasi Dani* as 'the most Serbian district in Bosnia-Herzegovina', not only alleging its ethnic structure but also Ostojic's political ideas.⁴¹ The leadership tried to describe the confrontation on a more personal level than an ethnic one but, as one can easily imagine, the attempt was not successful.

The celebration on Mount Romanija proved there was a basis for staging Serb meetings in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Some minor gatherings took place in some Serb-dominated areas. Nevesinje, in Herzegovina, and Sipovo, in Bosnia, were communities in which a dissatisfied population of Serb ethnic origin mixed with Serb nationalists and demanded changes. On 21 July in Nevesinje, local leaders resigned in response to the demands of several thousand people at the meeting.⁴² Three-quarters of the population in this poor community was made up of Serbs, while the rest were mainly Moslems. The locals did not fear a strong state apparatus any more and with demands for democracy heard even in the central committees, they wanted changes in their own small community. The community leaders were not only Serbs and, with the rise of nationalism, it became very hard for non-Serbs, or even non-nationalist Serbs, to remain in office. Thus, instead of democratic changes they demanded ethnic changes. The local leaders were blamed for harsh economic conditions. Hence, the demands and the excuse for change.

One could also find some historical bases for the events in Nevesinje. This small town was the centre of many rebellions in the Ottoman and Austrian eras. This might provide an explanation of historical hatred on the part of the local Serbs. It proves, however, only that different worlds existed in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nevesinje was an example of ethnic division and nationalism, suppressed under the communists, that arose after a long intermission.

In 1989, the basic line of division was Milosevic's policy. The majority of the community supported it and demanded such leadership. Pictures of Slobodan Milosevic were a main part of local folklore. When some stickers with Milosevic's photo were taken off machines in a local factory, the police had to investigate because inter-ethnic tensions immediately grew.⁴³ Later that year, nationalist slogans, both Serb and Moslem, were found locally, written on school buses.⁴⁴ In this kind of atmosphere it was almost impossible to find new candidates for the local leadership after the old ones were forced to resign. Only 14 out of 65 candidates accepted their nomination for nine posts in Nevesinje.⁴⁵ The whole process was postponed because they did not have the required two candidates for one post, which had become an unwritten rule during 1989.

However, the concern of Nevesinje Serbs was not only for their own community. Citluk was of a completely opposite ethnic structure, with the Croats making up 99 per cent of the local population. A partisan war veteran from Nevesinje accused them of staging meetings on an ethnic basis, which the Citluk leadership denied.⁴⁶ One could hardly imagine a multiethnic meeting in an ethnically homogeneous community and the accusations were actually nonsense. This led to a political confrontation between the two communities in Herzegovina, and it was ever obvious that it was along ethnic lines. It is hard to see any conspiracy behind this confrontation. Rather, it reflects the popular opinion in smaller communities, which only incidentally attracted attention in the main centres and the media.

Although Nevesinje was not universal in its nationalistic expressions, it was also not exclusive. A group of young men in Zvornik did not allow a bus from Serbia to enter Bosnia-Herzegovina because of Milosevic's poster on the windscreen. One cafe in Brcko was demolished because of graffiti supporting Milosevic on its walls. Two students in Sarajevo ended their discussion on Serbia with knives.⁴⁷ In two small communities in eastern Bosnia, Milici and Miljevina, the police were accused of, and attacked for, alleged anti-Serb policy.⁴⁸

It is clear that Milosevic himself was the critical factor that divided the population into supporters or opponents of his policy. As his policy was nationalist, only the Serbs might have supported it in Bosnia-Herzegovina. While the larger urban communities were cosmopolitan, provincial Bosnia-Herzegovina was divided. These were the areas where the historical roots of ethnic belonging were felt the most. Non-nationalists, who according to the Bosnian Communist Party's policy were in charge of these communities, came under pressure. Without local support and with a very weak central institutions in Sarajevo, local leaders were helpless. Non-Serbs were accused of exercising anti-Serbian policy, while Serbs were regarded as alienated bureaucrats who governed only for their own personal interest. The economic crisis produced many arguments for such opinions.

The interest of the community was not activated simply because of the general crisis in society. A number of scandals, involving the highest-ranking leaders and

some local leaders in various communities, also strengthened the arguments against the local leaderships. If the leaders were of a different ethnic origin to the majority of the local population, they were accused of acting against the interests of the community. If the leaders were of the same ethnic origin as the majority, they were accused of acting as alienated bureaucrats. These were the only issues. The 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' was against non-Serb appointees in local leaderships and targeted the old system which was still functioning, albeit only just. When the leaders refused to nominate pro-Milosevic candidates, the result was chaos and the breakdown of the local administration.

The rise of nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina was not restricted to only one area. Many citizens of Mostar and eastern Herzegovina, the region where Nevesinje is situated, received mysterious letters in which Slobodan Milosevic was glorified, while local non-Serb leaders were attacked for their incompetence.⁴⁹ But there were also incidents in other areas. In Brcko, in northern Bosnia, three people were arrested for their graffiti, in which they praised Milosevic and attacked local leaders.⁵⁰ The policy of Slobodan Milosevic had established the basic line along which people were divided in Bosnia-Herzegovina. But despite the appeal of Serbian 'social Messianism', which was proven by Milosevic's following, similar processes started in the other ethnic groups. As Tim Judah argues regarding the nature of the Serbs: 'It was the conjunction of historical circumstances, personalities, arrogance and misjudgements which led to the war, and it is important to keep in mind that the Serbs, as a people are no different from anyone else in Europe.'⁵¹

The Bosnian-Herzegovinian police warned people several times about the rise of nationalist incidents. According to the police, during the Christmas holidays, those who were working abroad were bringing home nationalist propaganda. The worst situation was in western Herzegovina, with its almost exclusively Croat population.⁵² On the very same day as Milosevic's Belgrade mass meeting, on 28 February 1989, where he initiated the arrest of Albanian leaders in Kosovo, Franjo Tudjman and some notorious Croat nationalists formed the HDZ, the Croat Democratic Union [Hrvatska demokratska zajednica]. He marked it as the 'entry on the political scene of a silent Croatia'.⁵³ The Croatian communist leadership was really rather quiet and tried to find a compromise between the Serbs and the Slovenes, hence the remark. The formation of the HDZ meant that new nationalist forces were about to join the battle for power and territory. In Bosnia-Herzegovina during 1989, however, both Croat and Moslem nationalists were still mostly quiet.

One should note, however, that this was the period when Iranian officials called for Salman Rushdie's murder. The Iranian President, Ali Hamnei, caused a diplomatic scandal by repeating the call for Rushdie's death while on an official visit to Yugoslavia.⁵⁴ In Sarajevo, the imams of the Bosnian Islamic community claimed they would not support Khomeini, but that they, too, were against Rushdie's work.⁵⁵ However, a more extreme faith existed in Bosnia-Herzegovina and one book-shop was attacked in the centre of Sarajevo. As Dubravko Brigic

later described, 'I did a report on the first bomb attack in Sarajevo. The first victim was a book! The Molotov Cocktail destroyed a shop window in which *The Satanic Verses*, a novel by Salman Rushdie, was exhibited'.⁵⁶ This proves the existence of fundamentalist supporters in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but their number was likely to be very low, as it was the only incident of this kind. It might also have been connected with protests and changes within the Islamic religious community, since the lower ranks wanted the state to have less control and influence. When the protests became public it showed that the leaders were not able to control, or at least to direct, the attitudes of the imams and the faithful.

In 1989 the first violent incidents based on ethnic feelings or attitudes took place in Sarajevo. In the very centre of Sarajevo in October 1989, the offices of some companies from Slovenia and Serbia were attacked overnight and some shots were fired on their property.⁵⁷ This incident also indicates the atmosphere in Sarajevo at the time. The Serbo-Slovene political conflict came to a head and both sides in Sarajevo came under attack. It might easily have been organized with the backing of some official institution in Bosnia-Herzegovina because of a similarity in political stands, but there was no proof for such claims. Nonetheless, these were the first armed incidents in Bosnia-Herzegovina with any kind of ethnic background.

SERBIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN BOSNIAN AFFAIRS

In order to strengthen their own position amid rising nationalist claims, by mid-1989 leading communists in Bosnia-Herzegovina sensed a need to underline Bosnian sovereignty. This was a response to the growing nationalism in the other republics. All the other republics in the Federation were actually nation-states of the majority peoples, but Bosnia-Herzegovina was different. Therefore, the leadership often repeated the phrase that Bosnia-Herzegovina was *neither* a Moslem, or a Serb or a Croat republic, but *also* a Moslem, *also* a Serb and *also* a Croat republic. It might sound like nonsense but it made political sense at the time.

The need for a strengthening of sovereignty was proven with the involvement of Serbian police in Bosnian territory. The weakness of the Sarajevo regime was illustrated by the fact that they found out about the work of Serbian intelligence services on Bosnian soil, only from Serbian officials. In autumn 1989, Bogic Bogicevic received a document from his Serbian colleague in the Federal Presidency, Borisav Jovic. It showed that Serbian intelligence services exercised their authority in two towns, Srebrenica and Bratunac, in eastern Bosnia next to the Serbian border. They did not have authority for any kind of work in other republics without the prior knowledge and permission of the republic in question. The information about their activities was sent to the six highest-ranked officials in Serbia, including Borisav Jovic. The report claimed that the old Ottoman beys' families, '... are in a strong ideological relation with the Islamic Religious Community. They make up intensively deep-rooted governing

apparatus ever more closer to the original patterns of Islamic rule.⁵⁸ The information stated that some Moslem workers in a packaging factory in nearby Skelani, demanded segregated canteens and departments for workers of different ethnic and religious origin. It also spoke about the character of local leadership in Srebrenica and Bratunac. The President of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Obrad Piljak, sent a letter to Milosevic on 28 September demanding an explanation. Milosevic never answered.

Both the Serbian President and the acts of the intelligence services showed arrogance towards Bosnia-Herzegovina, its leaders and services. However, they also revealed a certain secret agenda, Eastern Bosnia would be the first to be overrun by the Serb military in spring 1992. The Sarajevo leadership might have been incompetent at the time, but was certainly not nationalist or anti-Serbian. The leaders, at least the majority of them, still believed in the old communist doctrine of 'brotherhood and unity'. Some members of the republic's leading circles openly expressed certain concerns about the policy in Serbia and its influences in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but they did not take any anti-Serb stand in their policy. The incident repeatedly showed differences within the leadership in Sarajevo. Although none of the leading politicians took a nationalist stand, some of them had one-sided views. Branko Ekert, a member of the republic's Presidency, claimed that the Serbian intelligence service was not engaged in misconduct in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁵⁹ At the same time Ivo Cvitkovic, a member of the party's Presidency in Bosnia-Herzegovina, stated that, The reckless work of a part of [the] Serbian secret police...is an attack on the sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁶⁰ Ekert, a Serb, had different views from Cvitkovic, who was a Croat, and in a society that started to split along ethnic lines, this difference was felt to be important—despite the fact that neither of them showed any ethnic inclination towards nationalist policies. But the fact was that the Serbian secret police had done something in Srebrenica and Bratunac. It seems that some of the Serbs in leading circles still, however mistakenly, believed in Milosevic's good will and, therefore, did not want to make a big deal out of some minor incident. The federal police also denied claims that the Serbian intelligence services were working in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The republic's Socialist Alliance had a different opinion to the federal police. It seemed that a total confrontation had begun at a political level. Sarajevo-based institutions were on the one side, with a few exceptions who shared Belgrade's opinion, while the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs, headed by a Serbian general, was on the other. Hence, the following statement from the new party leader, Nijaz Durakovic: 'Serb nationalism is in the offensive now in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They use... even clergy to achieve their aims.'⁶¹ Durakovic, as a Moslem, had to be very careful and brave when deciding to criticize some other ethnic group's nationalism. One might conclude that it became very serious when Durakovic took such a step. His opinion was shared by many, including the Minister of Internal Affairs, who took a similar step by talking about the role of the clergy in the rise of all nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁶²

Until this time, Bosnia-Herzegovina had always been threatened by some non-official institutions or movements originating in Serbia. They demanded to be allowed to stage some demonstrations and express some critical views of the situation on a nationalist basis. The actions of the Serbian secret services, the arrogance of the Serbian leaders and the media coverage of the affair by the Belgrade-based press, were the first real and open attacks on the sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina from official circles in Serbia. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the autumn of 1989 the press in Serbia, which was under the absolute control of Milosevic, started an open campaign against Bosnia-Herzegovina. This time it was not only against the leadership, but also against the idea of a common republic for all citizens and ethnic groups. The daily newspapers *Politika* and *Politika ekspres* suggested that Bosnia-Herzegovina was a state of Moslems in which Serbs and Croats also lived. *Intervju*, a political fortnightly, stated that, 'A kind of an anti-Serb spring imported from Slovenia into Bosnia-Herzegovina blossomed up in the middle of autumn.'⁶³ During the old, peaceful times in Yugoslavia, this kind of nationalism would, in the first instance, have been criticized in Serbia. By 1989, it was actually orchestrated through the controlled Belgrade media. Predrag Tasic described the situation:

Editions of *Politika* were attacking [the] Bosnian-Herzegovinian leadership that, they claimed, supports an anti-Serbian opinion. They [*Politika*] quietly admitted that they were actually forcing the Serbs out of Bosnia-Herzegovina and put them into [an] underprivileged position by such articles. Therefore the supreme power in the republic (Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina) protested over such writing and threatened to withdraw accreditation [of] the *Politika* correspondents...⁶⁴

At the party congress these incidents, provoked by Serbian policy, proved that the times had changed and the party, the system and the common state were moving towards an indefinite breakdown on an ethnic basis. This was preceded by the congresses of the republics' organizations. The Tenth Congress of the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina took place in December 1989 in Sarajevo. On earlier occasions, the Congress was used to manifest the strength and unity of the movement and reflect on its successes. The major issue on the agenda was usually a leader's speech, describing all the past achievements. No political confrontation would take place and the media published whole speeches by the main politicians. Even the congress in 1986, the last before the Agrokomerc scandal and the rise of nationalism in Serbia, was no different. This time, however, the delegates were divided between those who supported Milosevic's populist approach, most of whom were Serbs, and those who heavily opposed his policy and warned of its possible consequences. Filip Ujevic was one of the latter: 'Serbian nationalism is institutional. The only question is what

is its next step; whether it is a fratricidal war or an expansion of the new religion of the crusaders.’⁶⁵

The recently rehabilitated old revolutionary, Osman Karabegovic, attracted much attention from both the delegates and the media. However, his views were not those expected from a former dissident. He was one of the loudest supporters of movements in Serbia, despite the fact that he was of Moslem ethnic origin. He spoke about the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina as: ‘Propaganda with the aim, beside the rest, to systematically create a fear of some [allegedly] nationalist-chetniks forces from Serbia among the Moslems and Croats... In the “Socialist Republic of Serbia” there is a great democratic movement headed by communists.’⁶⁶ He was not the only one trapped by Milosevic’s policy, which publicly proclaimed communism but supported and produced Serbian nationalism. Some of the die-hard communists supported Milosevic at a time when many communist parties in Europe had abandoned the original ideas of communism and moved towards democracy. The non-Serbs were the most obvious example of such beliefs, if not that numerous, since one could hardly expect a nonSerb to support Serbian nationalism. In the end, the congress did not solve the enigma of who would be supported at federal level: Milosevic or those promoting pro-democratic ideas. The only certainty the congress offered was that they would meet again if the Federal Congress failed to produce results. Nationalism was their main concern because it divided the party. Hence, the warning of the party chairman, Nijaz Durakovic, about the danger of rising nationalism: ‘Our republic is not, neither it could be a supra-national community. But it is not, neither it could be, a mechanical summary of confronted ethnic entities closed within their own.’⁶⁷

This was also the response to the question repeatedly asked in the Belgrade press about whose republic Bosnia-Herzegovina was. The chairman tried to underline the equality of all the nations in the republic and remind people of the old and successful policy of ‘brotherhood and unity’, exercised by his predecessors. Thus, the final solution was left to the Federal Congress in January 1990, in Belgrade. At the republic’s level, various organized and non-organized civil groups waited for a new law that would allow multiparty elections. It would only be a matter of time and Bosnian civil groups did not have to play any role in these changes. They were inevitable at this stage. The only question was whether the communists finally would dissolve themselves, or whether they would find some compromise and strengthen their position for a political competition with opponents in the very near future.

THE END OF THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS

All the developments described above make the clear assumption, found in all media, that the party was destined to dissolve. Numerous sessions of the communist federal highest body (SKJ) were held in an effort to find a solution, but in vain: divisions became ever greater. In a single-party state, reflections on

the state itself are even greater and more dangerous when the party cannot solve its problems. Zdravko Grebo, who had just become a member of the Federal Central Committee, resigned from the party's highest body at the session during the summer of 1989. His description of the state of the party was, at the time, one of the most accurate:

I will not be the first to state that the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, as a united organization, does not exist any longer in a real sense. It does not exist either in a territorial or programmatic sense... This Central Committee was, in many ways during its work, the basic disintegrating factor in the country.⁶⁸

The Slovenes wanted major reforms of the party and the system. The Croats were mainly quiet at the time, while the party in Bosnia-Herzegovina was trying to achieve unity with everybody. The Serbian bloc, consisting of parties from Serbia and Montenegro, also wanted reforms, but of a different sort. They wanted more power and less democracy for those outside the mainstream in Serbia, that is, for whoever was not with Milosevic. Furthermore, the party organizations in Slovenia and Serbia could be characterized as nationalist. Hence, confrontation was even stronger. The splits between the communists were reflected by divisions in the state. Borisav Jovic, a Serbian member of the Federal Presidency, described confrontations at the highest level in his diary. On 24 May 1989 he wrote:

Session of the presidency. Ante [Markovic, the Prime Minister] gave information in detail on the federal government's work. It seems he is taking some decisions that are in the interest of Croatia... Serbia should take care...especially if one is not sincere about the common future.⁶⁹

At the time, it was not yet Croatia, but Slovenia that was the main enemy in Serbian nationalist circles. Jovic clearly shows this in his diary when he describes a meeting with a Slovene, Janez Drnovsek, who was President of the Federal Presidency:

He talked with the colleagues in Slovenia and they said to him that they have invited the Serbian leadership to Slovenia some time ago but the invitation was declined. I told him it was true but the Serbian leadership had no intentions to humiliate itself...and go to visit—to pay respect to [the Slovenes]. The Serbs would not receive them even here [in Belgrade] and especially they would not go to Ljubljana...⁷⁰

This shows that all the efforts of the leading communists from all of the Yugoslav republics to achieve some kind of agreement about the country's future, however insincere some of them might have been, had been in vain. This

situation lasted for several years. Nationalist forces within the party became more influential during the period when the political system was weakening. Under these circumstances the League of Communists of Yugoslavia organized its congress to discuss the party's problems once and for all. The congress took place in January 1990, although the party could not agree even on its title. The Serb bloc wanted it to be 'Extraordinary', which would enable an easier voting procedure and decision-making process for the pro-Milosevic faction. The others wanted it to be the 'Fourteenth', that is, an ordinary congress, which would prevent procedures taken by the majority of members being imposed over others. Since the membership in Serbia was bigger than in the rest of Yugoslavia, proportional representation at the congress would enable the outvoting of the others by the pro-Milosevic bloc. In the end, a compromise was found and the official title was 'The Fourteenth Extraordinary Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia'.

The congress was attended by 1,655 delegates, 114 of whom were from Slovenia, while 564 came from Serbia, including Vojvodina and Kosovo. Delegates from Bosnia-Herzegovina outnumbered those from all the republics except Serbia. The congress delegates came from 17 different ethnic groups: 545 Serbs, 195 Croats, 137 Macedonians, 128 Yugoslavs, 122 Montenegrins, 114 Slovenes and 95 Moslems, while the rest came from ethnic minorities. There were 63 Albanians, 21 Hungarians and some other smaller minorities.⁷¹

During the congress's first session, the different national communists showed no desire for compromise and their differences became unbridgeable. Their differences were linked more to national interests than to ideological options. The Serbian majority refused almost all Slovene proposals, even though some of them did not contradict the policy of the Serbian communists' organization. As a result, the Slovenes left the congress, which provoked the break up of the congress and consequently of the party. The last attempt within the Communist League to save the country was made at the congress by four members of the Bosnian delegation, led by Zdravko Grebo.

When it became obvious, even to the leading communists, that the federal party would fall apart, the four younger delegates from Bosnia-Herzegovina proposed to split the party on an ideological basis, making two parties: one with a communist ideology and another one with a socialist one. The proposal was not adopted and national divisions took place. The initiative was proposed by Desimir Medjovic, who had less favour with the public than Grebo and was less experienced in public speaking. These disadvantages certainly contributed to some extent to the rejection of the idea. Milosevic's bloc condemned it as a party surrender, while the Slovenes were, it seems, more interested in ethnic than ideological division. The events that immediately followed showed that they actually saw an easier future on their own. Even if they supported the idea, the Serbian bloc would refuse it.

It is interesting that this initiative, albeit named after its proposers as the 'Bosnian Initiative', in fact originated in Montenegro. Some liberal Montenegrin

delegates had prepared the proposal but were afraid of suggesting it publicly. Their fear stemmed from the behaviour of the ruling party in Montenegro. The Bosnians, in contrast, were not afraid to put forward publicly the proposal. This is proof of the consolidation of civil society in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which even gave more freedom to the Communist Party members within the party itself. At least in this case, the old communist phrase about the 'indestructible connections of the party and society' was proven to be true.

The leader of the group, Zdravko Grebo, already known as one of the leading proponents of civil society in Bosnia-Herzegovina, left the party after the congress. His first disappointment with the party had led him out of the Central Committee six months earlier and, this time, he even cut off his membership. The League of Communists could not reform itself or society; the only option left for those willing and able to do something was to leave the party and set up competitive political organizations. Many other members of the party followed suit, though for different reasons. Some left the party because of their disagreement with Milosevic's hostile policy, but others left because the Bosnian communists did not support Milosevic in his last attempt to take over the whole organization at federal level and impose his own agenda on Yugoslav society. Their protest was not immediate because Durakovic made a statement at the congress that quite pleased Milosevic's supporters.

The 'Bosnian Initiative' provoked Durakovic to say that as far as he was concerned, the doors were wide open to all those who wanted to leave.⁷² His statement was misunderstood as support for Milosevic's bloc against the Slovenes, who actually left the congress. When Durakovic explained himself later, it only provoked a further desertion of the party.⁷³ National ideologies were not only dividing the community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also the party membership.

Members from all ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina left the party ranks in greater numbers immediately after the congress broke up. Many Croat and Moslem members were already on their way out of the party in protest against Milosevic's policy. Potential reformers were also inspired to leave because of the failure of the 'Bosnian Initiative'. Finally, the Serbs were still waiting for clearer signals as to whether or not Milosevic would be supported by the Bosnian leadership. Post-congress statements and the policy of the Sarajevo leaders also provoked many Serbs to leave the party. Durakovic was left with a young leadership which still believed in the possible reform of the party, though only at a republican level, and with the die-hard supporters of the left.

The League of Communists of Yugoslavia had ceased to exist. Since it had been a one-party state, the question remained of how the state would survive. The leading communists did not care too much about it. The struggle for votes in the respective republics started. With the rise of nationalism the ethnic question became more important than the future destiny of the state or the ideology of the ruling party. The Slovenes had already started a political competition in their republic and the Croats quickly followed. The others were not clear yet, but it

was obvious that after the whole of eastern and central Europe had overtaken Yugoslavia with this kind of reform, the multiparty system and elections would come soon. They were necessary for one more reason: the communists could not agree on how to transform the Federation. Therefore, new leaderships, that is, the electoral victory of those who really represented the population, were needed for new negotiations about the future of the federal state.

The rise of nationalism in Serbia, Slovenia and, by now, in Croatia, were significant factors in determining the results of the forthcoming political competition. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, there was as yet no institutional nationalism, but nationalist incidents became a part of life in the provincial towns. Despite occasional violence, almost entirely outside Bosnia-Herzegovina, the prospects of full-scale war seemed very far away. The press and politicians in Bosnia-Herzegovina kept warning about the rise of nationalism, but all public statements show that at the beginning of 1990, the war was not yet in view.

NOTES

1. Statement from the session of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina on 20 February 1989, published in all Bosnian media the following day.
2. Banac, I., 'Post-Communism as Post-Yugoslavism: The Yugoslav Non-Revolutions of 1989–1990', in I. Banac (ed.), *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 174.
3. Koljevic, N., *Otadzbinske teme* (Belgrade: Export Public Itaka, 1995), p. 131.
4. Jovic, D., 'Zasto je Srbija prihvatila ustav iz 1974?', in C. Visnjic (ed.), *Ljetopis hiljadu devetsto devedeset osme* (Zagreb: Srpsko kulturno drustvo Prosvjeta, 1998), p. 64.
5. Thomson, M., *A Paper House: The Ending of Yugoslavia* (London: Vintage, 1992), p. 210.
6. Ibid.
7. See Banac, 'Post-Communism as Post-Yugoslavism', p. 177.
8. Ignatieff, M., *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 17.
9. Glenny, M., *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 31.
10. See Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*, p. 17.
11. See Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 32.
12. Meeting at which the Slovene elite gathered in 'Cankarjev dom' in Ljubljana on 27 February 1989; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
13. Slobodan Milosevic in his speech in front of the Federal Parliament on 28 February 1989; film research interviews and material for the documentary series 'Death of Yugoslavia', Brian Lapping Associates for the BBC (private collection, Tihomir Loza, 1995–96).
14. See Banac, 'Post-Communism as Post-Yugoslavism', p. 177.
15. See Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 32.
16. TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes, 29 November 1989 (private collection n/a).

17. The Constitution of Serbia of 28 March 1989 (private collection n/a).
18. Slobodan Milosevic at Gazimestan, 28 June 1989; film research interviews and material for the documentary series 'Death of Yugoslavia', Brian Lapping Associates for the BBC (private collection, Tihomir Loza, 1995–96).
19. See Glenny *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 33.
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32. Avdic, S., research interview, August 1999.
33. Croatian Minister of Science, Velimir Srica, in *Nedjelja*, 29 January 1989, p. 5.
34. *Mladina*, 10, 17 and 24 March 1989.
35. Muhamed Besic in the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 21 March 1989; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
36. Muhamed Besic, *Oslobodjenje*, 15 March 1989, p. 1.
37. *Borba*, 13 May 1989, p. 1.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
40. Rasim Kadic at the session of RK SSRN, summer 1989; TV Sarajevo broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
41. *Nasi Dani*, Sarajevo, 1 September 1989, p. 3; see also articles in *Nasi Dani* during August 1989.
42. *Nin*, 30 July 1989, p. 19.
43. *Borba*, 13 May 1989, p. 4.
44. *Borba*, 8 December 1989, p. 4.
45. *Borba*, 22 September 1989, p. 4.
46. Nikola Aleksic published his letter in *Vecernje Novosti*, a Belgrade daily, on 4 November 1989. The local committee of the communists, in Citluk, replied with the announcement on 7 November 1989; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
47. *Borba*, 13 May 1989, p. 4.

48. Muhamed Besic in the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 21 March 1989; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
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55. *Vjesnik*, 12 March 1989, p. 7.
56. Brigic, Dubravko, in *Dani*, 1 September 1999, p. 10.
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58. *Danas*, 24 October 1989, pp. 15–16.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.
60. *Ibid.*
61. Nijaz Durakovic, in *Nedjeljna Dalmacija*, 17 October 1989.
62. *Oslobodjenje*, 15 March 1989, p. 1.
63. Interview quoted in *Danas*, 31 October 1989.
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65. Tenth Congress of the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Filip Ujevic's discussion, congress documents.
66. *Ibid.*, Osman Karabegovic's discussion.
67. *Ibid.*, Nijaz Durakovic's discussion.
68. Zdravko Grebo at the session of CK SKJ, *Danas*, 19 September 1989, p. 7.
69. Jovic, B., 'Poslednji dani SFRJ: izvodi iz dnevnika', in *Politikz Belgrade*, 1995, p. 12.
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.
71. The documents of the 14th Congress of the Federal League of Communists and reports in all Yugoslav media.
72. Nijaz Durakovic at the 14th Congress of the Federal League of Communists, Congress' documents.
73. Nijaz Durakovic tried very hard to explain the real meaning of his statement. This could be found in many interviews following the congress including the one on Omladinski Radio Sarajevo in February 1990; broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).

The Emergence of Political Alternatives

Serious political alternatives emerged in 1990. The Communist Party was challenged for the first time and struggled to shape new rules for the changed political context. There were three clear options: one was the renewal of the communist system and the regime's preservation of power; the second was ethnic politics and the third was economic reform followed by political reform, as advocated by the Federal Government. Ante Markovic, Federal Prime Minister, repeatedly stressed the need for this kind of reform, thus trying to avoid the involvement of ethnic politics in discussions. Presumably he hoped that economic reforms would have such results that ethnic politics would become less important. The first two options were already present in the other parts of Yugoslavia and the leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina had to decide which option to adopt.

There were several crucial factors during this period that set the conditions for different political options:

- The communist leadership was weak and indecisive.
- There was a lack of experience in terms of independent reporting in the media and a rising tendency to replace communist patrons with nationalist ones.
- The role of outside factors and influence of developments in the other republics increased.
- The increasingly important role of the clergy was present in all three communities.
- There was clearly a division between the urban, educated, largely secular parts of society and the more ethnically oriented rural areas. This division was to become critical when political parties were finally established.

COMMUNISTS AND DILEMMAS

After the split of the federal party, republican communists took different directions in various republics. The system in Slovenia had already changed, owing to reforms led by the communists and a strong civil society. The result was a democratic system that brought a coalition of new parties to power. Their common ground was an ethnic concern for the nation. The reformed

communists, however, remained influential and their candidate was elected president of the republic. In Croatia, the ruling communists tried to follow the Slovene example, but there was a clear danger that ethnic politics, already present in the republic, might move towards extremism—as indeed it did in May 1990. Thus, these two republics entered a pluralist political life in which great importance was given to ethnic politics. The major difference was the ethnic composition of the republics. There were very few non-Slovenes living in Slovenia, while a significant Serb minority lived in Croatia. Therefore ethnic politics divided society and brought extreme options into political life and power.

Meanwhile, in other parts of the Federation, the Milosevic-controlled communists made efforts to renew communism. His party hesitated to allow political competition. They tried to renew their ideology on an ethnic basis and were successful in the Serb-dominated republics. Milosevic resisted all the challenges of democratization and, at the end of 1989, organized his own elections with only one party contesting the seats, albeit there were more candidates than seats. New elections, however, would take place just a year later, following great pressure from the opposition parties in Serbia. The results would not, however, change Milosevic's hold on power and absolute control of Serbia.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the great dilemma was whether to enter the world of ethnic politics or to modify Milosevic's example and work on the renewal of communism but without ethnic elements. The third option was to support the radical economic reform that the Federal Government had just begun. A kind of 'new deal' was announced in December 1989. The reforms received huge public support for their initial economic results and also because of Markovic's refusal to involve himself in ethnic politics. As long as he managed to avoid this area, he was allowed to conduct his economic reforms. The problem was that neither a renewed communist system nor an ethnic political strata were compatible with his reforms. Markovic needed a third approach, of non-ethnic and liberal ideology, to support his plans.

The leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina did not make a clear decision about which direction to take because it was obvious that, whichever decision was made, it would be the wrong one. International and historic circumstances made any effort to modernize, reform themselves and remain in power very improbable. Their only chance to remain in power legally was to stick with the one-party system. As this was impossible in Europe of 1990, they had to try to find another solution. Meanwhile ethnic problems and national homogenization were growing all over Yugoslavia and especially in the two neighbouring republics. Their influence was already felt in the provincial towns of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Therefore, Markovic's popularity and his reforms, albeit non-communist ones, seemed the safest option for the communist rulers in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The communists in Bosnia-Herzegovina did not hold power in the same way as those in Serbia. The media, even the official outlets, were free, while many liberal-minded intellectuals and politicians were proposing changes directed

towards democratic society and did not fall out of favour for this reason. However, by the end of 1989, real opposition still did not exist. Most of those who disagreed publicly with the official line were actually in the orbit of the League of Communists. Although the events in eastern and central Europe during 1989 and the Congress of the League of Communists in January 1990 brought about the view that changes were inevitable, those in charge of the League in Bosnia-Herzegovina were not sure about their direction.

The first indication of the Bosnian leadership's intentions was the new Election Law, passed by the Parliament at the end of 1989. They intended to justify their hold on power with further single-party elections. The 'alternative', ironically made up of some communists, but also liberal intellectuals, replaced a non-existent opposition and voiced their demands. Although the public seemed to be rather quiet, freedom in the media created an impression of increasing pressure on the leaders to allow proper democracy. New political forces were not yet organized, but comments and articles demanding legislative changes to allow the setting up of political opposition, and consequently competition, were numerous. This paragraph from a published article summarizes the positions:

Current Election Law cannot be the basis of the new type of the elections albeit, in general, it enables candidacy from outside the Socialist Alliance and, therefore, enables the alternative to compete for the seats in Social-Political Chamber of the Parliament. It was 'forgotten' to pass the rules on how to register them [opposition] on time [for the elections].¹

The position and weakness of the communists was manifested by the fact that, even without official protests and expressions of popular dissent, the proposed 'only communists' elections, originally planned for March, were soon postponed for at least three months. The originally proposed elections allowed non-communist organizations to compete for some but not all of the posts, although more in theory than in practice. Thus only the opinions expressed by some intellectuals outside the party, or in its orbit, were able to force a delay and allow changes towards democracy. By March, some citizens' associations were registered but they did not have the influence, or even the ambition, to play a more important role. There was no significant organized political force in Sarajevo at that time. The Greens, as in the Soviet Union and East Germany, were the only force in official existence not belonging to the Socialist Alliance.

The division between rural and urban regions is clear in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the time, the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ) was already very influential in western Herzegovina, although not officially. Ethnic politics played an important role within the Serbian population as well, but it was not yet organized. One should say, rather, they were still well orchestrated by Belgrade. The Moslems, including Izetbegovic, showed the will to play some political role in public life in March 1990 when they announced their intention to organize politically. However, they were all rather quiet at the time and did not call on citizens to join

them in public. This could better be described as a 'pre-party' stage during which organizational preparations behind the scene were taking place.

Pressure from the media and non-organized individuals, and a lack of determination within the highest ranks forced the rulers to take a step back and further postpone the elections. It was a strange situation, as it seems that the only strong alternative to the communists came from within their own ranks or orbit, that is, those who had just left the party or its highest ranks, but who remained ideologically close to it. Thus, some younger members of the party establishment, independent intellectuals who often appeared in the media and even the official Youth Organization, were the ones who presented a political alternative to the single-party state. No dissidents or nationalists played any role in early 1990. Ethnic politics, at least in public, was not yet the major issue. The struggle was more between liberal individuals close to the party ranks and the more traditionalist set that ignored developments in the rest of the communist world. Many 'liberals' were known from the very recent communist period. Desimir Medjovic, known for the 'Bosnian Initiative' at the party's congress, explained the political situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the congress: 'One could say that the alternative in Bosnia-Herzegovina is represented by "the alternative" primarily in the Youth Organization and to a lesser extent in the League of Communists. Some extremely influential individuals also should not be ignored.'² The term 'alternative' was used to describe ideas and the individuals promoting them that were different from those advocated by the system's official institutions. This really meant those individuals putting pressure on officials in power to make democratic changes. They were no longer afraid of or endangered by the system. As the number of pro-democratic people grew, their demands became louder.

With a lack of proper, different, political parties, many tried to survey public opinion concerning the relevant movements that were all, more or less, linked to the communists. The Sarajevo-based magazine *Valter* published its survey in December 1989. This was one of the first surveys and did not really check opinion in the whole republic but concentrated on a very small part of the urban population. The questions were about the popularity of politicians and political organizations. The most popular organization was the Youth Organization, at 25.5 per cent, just ahead of the League of Communists at 23.5 per cent.³ There was no real opposition organized by a separate political party that would challenge the popularity of parts of the system. Both the younger and the older organizations were actually, at least officially, still a part of the organized Socialist Front.

The *Valter* survey also asked about the popularity of individuals. Zdravko Grebo was on top with 45 per cent, followed by Nenad Kecmanovic with 35 per cent and third only was the communist leader Nijaz Durakovic.⁴ Ironically, they were all members of the same party at the time of the survey and belonged to the same generation, who had taken up their positions after the great fall of the previous rulers. The nationalists who would come into power in less than 12

months were not mentioned at all by anybody surveyed. This only proves that ethnic politics in urban Bosnia-Herzegovina was all but non-existent prior to the political change in Croatia, when it joined Serbia in official nationalist policy.

The weakness of the communists was further proven by a widening gap between the leadership and the party membership. There was an increasing split along ethnic lines, which was helped by pressure from the Serbian media. The media in Serbia started to attack the still mainly inexperienced communist leadership in Sarajevo. They were determined to discredit Bosnian-Herzegovinian politicians who disagreed with Milosevic: almost the entire leadership in Sarajevo could be described as such. However, many members were of a different attitude. Many communists from Banja Luka's region, most of them presumably Serbs, were dissatisfied with the policy exercised by the headquarters in Sarajevo.⁵ The Belgrade media gave them full support. They looked for arguments of a regional nature but it was obvious that Serbdom was behind the scenes. Bosnia-Herzegovina was really a centralized republic, and the second largest town in any society would be expected to bring some rivalry into the community. This was not, however, the reason behind the disagreements, because whenever the officials from Banja Luka criticized some leader from Sarajevo, he always happened to be a Moslem. They did not mention ethnic backgrounds but it was obvious that the names of those criticized were not Serbian or Croatian.

Many local communist committees announced their support for Yugoslavia through demands for the continuing work of the party at a federal level. They all blamed the Slovenes, and not Milosevic, for its failure and were willing to send delegates to Belgrade. The ethnic splitting of the party progressed further with its more decisive political moves in spring 1990. The membership, not only the Serbs, was dissatisfied with the unsolved dilemma of the leaders, that is, whether to support Milosevic's initiatives to continue the abandoned party congress, or openly to confront such ideas and thus join the Slovenes and Croats. It became obvious that the leadership could not agree with Milosevic's faction, while the Slovene and Croat communists were concerned only with their own multiparty elections in April 1990.

The time came for the long delayed final decision when the already forgotten Congress of the League of Communists was 'continued' without all its pro-democratic delegates. This last effort by Milosevic to use the party for the expansion of his policy into the other republics gave the leaders in Sarajevo a new set of problems. They needed unity in the party but were unable to push both sides—Serbs on the one hand and the rest on the other—towards a compromise. This was reflected in the speech of their leader, Nijaz Durakovic: 'Our basic opinion is that there are no historic or political reasons for the League of Communists, renewed and restructured on a radically different basis, not to exist as a Yugoslav political party.'⁶ Thus, he demonstrated an attempt to balance the different political options that were based mainly on ethnic origin. His participation at the congress was certainly an attempt to please the Serbs within

his party, but they had already been offended by some of his other statements in which he had criticized Serb nationalists. Furthermore, the situation did not favour panYugoslav organizations at all. Even the Greens, whose main concern was not a political one, did not try to set up their organization at a federal level. When they met in Split in January 1990, they agreed on many issues, but no one suggested the establishment of some kind of an official federal alliance.⁷

Thus the Central Committee had to exercise its own independent policy and further underline Bosnia-Herzegovina's self-identity. The argument that there was no Bosnia-Herzegovina without Yugoslavia was always present. Zlatko Lagumdžija, one of the new young leaders of the party, was the first to ask in public, 'Why not?'⁸ He argued that the republic could easily survive even without the Yugoslav federation. Surprisingly, there were no direct reactions. This type of new policy probably prevented further desertions from the party by some urban and more cosmopolitan members, but was not advocated in the party by a majority. The ethnic structure of the membership was another problem for the party. Ivo Komsic, a leading Croat member of the party's leadership, warned of the problem in April 1990:

Members of the SK BiH are 10.2 per cent Croats, 17.9 per cent Yugoslavs, 21.9 per cent Moslems and 38 per cent Serbs. The ethnic structure of the members of the Communist League of Bosnia-Herzegovina is completely different from the ethnic structure of the population.⁹

This fact made the growing tension between the party's organization in the Banja Luka region and the Sarajevo leadership even more serious, because many of the party's Serb members were from the region. The communists would lose many of them when the Serbs organized their own political party later in July 1990. There was a simple answer as to why the Serbs made up the majority of the party membership in 1990. Firstly, there had been a strong membership among the Serbs ever since the war, despite many positive actions to decrease the disproportion in the party membership and population of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Secondly, Milosevic, albeit an ethnic leader, stuck with his communist doctrine at a formal level, while other ethnic leaders claimed to be of a non-communist ideology. Also he interfered seriously with the other republics' politics and established himself as the Serbian popular leader. Therefore, the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina remained in the party until the sign came from Belgrade to set up their own party.

Furthermore, the highest-ranking Serbs in the Sarajevo party leadership were not persons of great political favour, at least among the Serbs. In the elections for the republic's presidency later in 1990, their two candidates were Nikola Stojanovic, a film director without any significant political past, and Mirko Pejanovic, the head of the other party, the former Socialist Alliance closely connected with the communists. Thus, the leading communists were not Serbs but the membership was. It created a great problem for the party during a period

of growing ethnic tension throughout Yugoslavia and, by then, in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well. The unbalanced ethnic structure of the communist ranks caused dissent and public criticism amongst some members of Croat and Moslem ethnic origin. Divisions at the federal level started to be reflected in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The leadership of the League of Communists in Bosnia-Herzegovina showed no inclination towards ethnic politics and tried to gain more sympathy in society by ignoring, to some extent, the most serious question of ethnic politics. It was exactly the field in which they were losing ground. The communists' weakness was manifested further by the detachment of the state apparatus from the party. The party was under pressure to stop behaving like a totalitarian apparatus. This was connected with the pressure for political competition. Effectively, a power vacuum was created when the party distanced itself from the governing bodies. Even the republic's government became autonomous in the decision-making procedure.

The result was a communist-made government without communist control over its work and a lesser number of party members in the government's ranks, although the ministers remained the same. The Minister of Science, Education and Culture, Milenko Brkic, even publicly stated that he could easily continue in office as a representative of an ethnic party.¹⁰ Indeed, he later became, though for a short period, leader of the HDZ. It was a bizarre situation: the whole of political life in Bosnia-Herzegovina seemed a bit bizarre during the first half of 1990.

The Communist Party was preoccupied with the above-mentioned problems and the government worked with little influence from the Central Committee. The leading party members were not in the government. However, when problems in state governing arose, it was the communists who came under attack, although they did not exercise control over the governing body. The whole system seemed to be awaiting changes. The Communist Party obviously delayed these processes and showed a lack of determination. This gave the rise of nationalism even more of a chance.

The Federal Government was in charge of the main economic issues and was doing well. Other problems, primarily political ones, awaited the new rulers in Sarajevo—although it was still not clear who they would be, when the political competition would take place and in what form it would begin. The republican premier even left the office later that year for a new post at federal level and nobody replaced him. His deputies acted on his behalf. This is the foremost example of how broken the system was. Parliament, also, could not find a way to reshape the system and introduce multiparty elections, while the Presidency was not made up of strong leaders, as it had been for decades previously when it served as the main power institution in Sarajevo. All this was the result of a weak party that had lost control over people's sense of duty to the institutions of state power.

The separation of the party and the state apparatus was not a unique feature. Local rulers, in many cases, did not show allegiance to Sarajevo, but to the predominant local political opinion, that is, nationalism. Ethnic differentiation was also felt among some journalists who had previously obeyed the executors of the decisions made by the power centres. Under the changed circumstances, such journalists looked for new patrons or simply followed their hearts. The leaders in Sarajevo were not only under attack from the Belgrade-based media: by 1990, the commentaries of some leading Sarajevo television journalists criticized the party from the perspective of the Serbian members. One journalist, in an unrelated incident, even resigned his party membership at the end of his report in front of the television camera.¹¹ It was clear that the party had very little, if any, influence over the media.

Instead of control over the media, the party used the rather democratic form of presenting a complaint. When some of TV Sarajevo's reports of nationalist incidents in neighbouring Serbia did not satisfy party leaders in Sarajevo, they complained without any consequences for the reporters and editors. A clear sign of how the party was regarded came with the media's reply. Instead of the previous self-criticism that had been obligatory in similar situations, some of the journalists of Serb ethnic background responded by criticizing the communist leaders' lack of reaction to Croat nationalist appearances.¹²

Similar steps were taken by the Sarajevo correspondents of the Belgrade media. Their party cell, at the meeting in April 1990, criticized Durakovic's leadership and policy. The correspondents even refused to dissolve their party branch, as was suggested by the leadership after the government ordered all political activities out of the work place. Ironically, the communist leaders were actually more reform-minded than the previously-controlled citizens were. It was the communist leaders who wanted to grant freedom to the state apparatus, the media and other institutions and not, in this case and a few others, the members, who actually refused the benefits of sudden freedom.

The media's gradually gained freedom did not always bring about positive results. A stronger ethnic display, even nationalism, started among some Serbs in the Bosnian media. The most notorious case among journalists was Smiljko Sagolj, who fell from power together with his political patrons during the Agrokomerc Scandal. In 1990 he was back on a wave of rising Croat nationalism. But even as late as the spring of 1990, Sagolj still argued about the lack of Croats in the party membership and not on the basis of HDZ policy.¹³ Thus, as a classical convert in search of strong political patrons, his case shows that even then a multiparty future was not determined or certain. If it had been, he would have argued on behalf of the HDZ and open Croat nationalism, as he did a few months later.

The time lag in reforms was certainly caused by the communists' lack of determination but the rest of society was similar. It was only at New Year in 1990 that *Oslobodjenje*, an official daily newspaper in Bosnia-Herzegovina, did not publish on its front page the slogan 'Comrade Tito we promise not to

abandon your path', which had appeared ever since his death in 1980. As a symbol of the movement towards a market economy, the space was filled with a commercial advertisement. The editors, however, felt the need to explain the change. Radio-Television Sarajevo later followed *Oslobodjenje's* example and abandoned the sound-signal commemorating Tito. Tito's cult status was still very strong in the republic but it seems that editors were finally forced to leave it behind, as future political competition was approaching in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Although the media had changed, elsewhere signs of the old days remained for a long time after. Even at the anti-war demonstrations in April 1992, miners arrived bearing Tito's picture. He was, for many Bosnians, a symbol of unity and peace. Hence the significance and weight of *Oslobodjenje's* decision. After all, a multiparty system and market economy could not run alongside Titoism. This was exactly the problem for the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina. No change was enough without some radical break with the past. However, the situation was not favourable for this kind of approach. In this case they would even lose the support of lifelong communists. Many of the others were already leaning towards ethnic politics. Thus, one could hardly expect more from the party under these circumstances.

The communists were not only under pressure from the pro-democratic forces and emerging nationalists in society. A strong popular inclination towards communism and a single-party political society was found by one of the most reliable surveys of the period. The problem with surveys conducted at the time was the lack of a democratic tradition and one could always doubt the sincerity of those questioned. The surveys, therefore, were not absolutely reliable, but they do give a cautious view of popular political attitudes. The survey asked about the present political situation in both Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was organized by the Institute for Research of Ethnic Relations of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The ethnic structure of the 842 people surveyed was similar to the census of 1981. However, one should bear in mind that the survey was organized by official communists in an effort to find out more about how their policy and reform of the party were accepted by the people.

A multiparty system would have negative consequences for Bosnia-Herzegovina, according to 45 per cent of those asked, while 63 per cent were against abolishing verbal delinquency from the Criminal Law.¹⁴ Previously this part of the Criminal Law had often been used against anybody criticizing the system or the party. Despite this fact, the majority of people were still in favour of such a law. These surprising answers may show the backwardness of the population in general, but also consensus. Whenever some more professional survey was conducted outside the urban centres, the results were very different from the opinions on the streets of Sarajevo, or those expressed in academic or journalistic discussions.

The most popular politician in the survey was Ante Markovic with his successful economic policy, followed by Slobodan Milosevic and his nationalist support, while Nijaz Durakovic came only fourth. However, most of those polled

supported no one in particular. This shows a widespread disappointment with the political situation. The ethnic dimensions of the political situation were very important to its authors. Twenty-eight point four per cent of Moslems, 20.7 per cent of Serbs and 14.9 per cent of Croats thought there was no full ethnic equality. Almost a third of all those questioned—34.8 per cent of Serbs, 32.5 per cent of Croats and 25.2 per cent of Moslems—said they would feel better if they lived where the majority of the population was of their own ethnic background. Less than a fifth—20.7 per cent of Moslems, 14.1 per cent of Croats and 11.4 per cent of Serbs—would accept ethnic determination for all citizens as Bosnians. Over half of those surveyed (58.6 per cent) thought that a new civil war was possible.¹⁵

All of these answers were given while the communists were still in power. It shows that two parallel worlds existed in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the time. One was on a path of democratization and economic change. Its supporters lived in urban centres and were ever present in public and in the media, although the question remains whether they were in a majority even in the urban centres. The other world was less educated and was composed of people living in smaller towns and villages. These people were more concerned with their own ethnic background. They were a majority without a public voice. When democracy and the multiparty elections came, they would be equal and the choice would be made by those occupying this second world. The core of civil society and some liberal-minded reformers in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar and Tuzla did not yet realize this fact. They saw a false picture because of their strong presence in the media and public life. Only after the elections would this become clear both to them and to the reformed communists.

While new political parties were being set up in other republics, the political scene in Bosnia-Herzegovina was still a rather timid one during the first months of 1990. On 12 March, the first newly formed political party was registered. The registration of the Democratic Party was soon followed by the registration of the Social-Democrat Alliance, the Democratic Party of Freedom and the Ecological Movement. They were all founded in Mostar and their only importance was that they were some of the first to be set up. None of them was influential, even at a local level. Some other minor parties were set up during the spring, but they had no influence at all over the political situation and developments.

Exercising equality, the communists invited them all to Parliament for the first time, to attend talks on electoral reform together with the representatives of the existing political organizations from the previous system. However, no decision about the future system was made at the meeting, nor was anything decided in the close circles of the communist ranks in Sarajevo. The first parties established in Bosnia-Herzegovina were not to become serious political competitors. The conditions of the future system were not yet clear and those more ambitious politicians with wider popular appeal were waiting for the right moment.

The communist leadership was faced with two problems. One was the growing number of attacks on the sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina, made by nationalists

in the neighbouring republics. As well as the attacks by the established communist nationalists in Serbia, the problem increased when the HDZ won the elections in Croatia. The second problem was what to do about the forthcoming elections in the republic. They certainly tried different approaches to this problem. Firstly, they intended to organize single-party elections. After realizing it would be too much, even for the public in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there was an idea to organize multiparty elections with some guaranteed seats for the existing political organizations, all controlled, though not very tightly, by the communists. This absurd idea was quickly abandoned, but they still did not know whether to allow ethnic political parties to enter the competition.

Despite the official ban, the HDZ was already organized, especially in western Herzegovina, and the SDA announced its intentions in public whereas the Serbs' ethnic party was late getting organized. However, the ground was prepared, that is, nationalist popular attitude and dislike of all present political parties; all that was missing was an elite to set up and lead the party. The power vacuum established in 1990, however, led to delays in the setting up of the system for political competition. Therefore, the official inauguration of the parties would mark the beginning of the preelectoral campaign during the summer of 1990, despite the fact that the election date was as yet unknown.

MARKOVIC'S ECONOMIC REFORMS

The new government, headed by Ante Markovic, entered office on 16 March 1989. He described the state of the economy in his inaugural speech:

Despite the policy of extensive employment, the number of unemployed has risen to 43 per cent in the period between 1980 and 1988... The real wages were lower by 25 per cent... The annual inflation rate in 1988 was 199 per cent. Current inflation with which we entered 1989 was actually much higher: from June 1988 until January 1989, the monthly inflation rate was 15.4 per cent, which puts the annual level of inflation rate at 458 per cent. However, the rise in prices was further accelerated in February. Therefore, we could say now that we have inflation at the level of nearly 1,000 per cent.¹⁶

The positive difference was in the relation between exports and imports. The economy had been directed towards a high level of imports for a very long period. The 1980s were the decade during which correlation between exports and imports was changed, though the cost was very high—and not only in economic terms. As some foreign analysts, such as Bartlet, thought:

Thus, in Yugoslavia, although the extreme currency depreciation has been effective in correcting the balance of payments deficit, turning an overall deficit of US\$2,000 million in 1980 into a surplus of US\$2,500 million in

1989, the cost of the policy has been high, because exports have responded only sluggishly to the price incentives that have been presented to producers.¹⁷

A very similar policy was continued until December 1989. The inflation rate increased even more under Markovic and serious social unrest was feared to an even greater extent. The new Federal Government was no more able to control inflation than the previous one. The monthly inflation rate was at 25 per cent; Markovic's government claimed it would fall to 16 per cent. If so, the yearly inflation rate would not be 998 per cent but 'only' 770 per cent.¹⁸ However, the inflation rate for the first half of 1989 was 234.9 per cent, less than expected from the monthly rates. In September, the monthly inflation rate was 48 per cent.¹⁹ By the end of the year, Yugoslavia was experiencing South American-type inflation rates. As Bartlet found, The rate of inflation of retail prices for 1989 was 1,256 per cent, and by December the annual rate of inflation had risen to 2,665 per cent.²⁰

Nonetheless, the reduction of foreign debts was one of the main achievements of Markovic's period in office. By mid-1989, they amounted to US\$16.9 billion. The net debt was only US\$14.2 billion because of money owed to Yugoslavia by other East European countries.²¹ The eastern European economies, primarily the USSR, owed ever-increasing amounts to companies in Yugoslavia. World petrol and oil prices went down, making USSR debts ever greater because this was one of their main means of repaying the debts. They amounted to US\$1.8 billion by the middle of 1989. The payments made to Yugoslav exporters by the eastern European economies were guaranteed by the Federation. The inflation rate was still rising because they paid, basically, by printing new money.²² When this practice was stopped by the Federal Government, companies dealing with eastern Europe faced severe financial troubles. Most of them were in Serbia, but there were also many in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This meant further social unrest. In the case of the Serbian economy, it meant heavy attacks against the government by the Serbian press. These were not the only problems concerning leading economists and politicians. A local economist painted a warning picture:

Yugoslavia is the world in miniature, in negative terms of the meaning. There are many of those who did not even notice that Yugoslavia as a real state has actually disappeared. It presents an odd alliance of states which are, unfortunately at the moment, mutually opposed to each other. They have, more or less, a complete autarchic economy and much-developed mutual suspicions and envy without a bit of solidarity feeling. The only remains are [the] common border, which is closed for foreign products by high taxes and customs, and common currency, which, as one of the basic symbols of sovereignty, suffers, logically. The destiny of the federal state: they are destroying it by common consent.²³

These kinds of statements were heard more often towards the end of the decade. But it was obvious, even to outsiders, that the Yugoslav socialist experiment and self-management did not work. As Gellner pointed out:

If some mixed entrepreneurial socialism were feasible, one must assume that the erstwhile Yugoslavs, who tried ardently to find it for decades, ever since their in-between international position gave them a strong motive for seeking to be the pioneers of the Third Way, would have found it.²⁴

The economy remained in this type of condition until the end of 1989. The government, meanwhile, tried very hard to prevent a further worsening of living conditions, but was not successful. It seems that Markovic regarded the economy as the main problem in reforming the state and society. Political reform was in the hands of the leading communists in the central committees. While the political crisis culminated in the party's congress, the economic one appeared to be on the way to a solution. Prior to the congress, in December 1989, Markovic announced a new programme of economic reforms in Yugoslavia. It was a very brave programme, revised by the American economist, Jeffrey Sachs.

Earlier, a new Enterprise Law had replaced the Law of Associated Work of 1976. This law was regarded as a 'workers' constitution' giving and securing the rights of employees. It proved, however, to be an obstacle in economic reforms and was finally replaced. This allowed new forms of ownership: social ownership remained the practice but some other forms were introduced or encouraged, such as private, cooperative and mixed ownership. The credit for this reform went to Markovic's team although his predecessor, Mikulic, initiated some of the changes. The December reform was influenced to a great extent by the American expert. Bartlet described it in his analysis:

The policy involved pegging the dinar to the Deutschmark, a temporary wage freeze, free market price-setting and a tight monetary policy including an end to soft budget constraints, with the object of reducing inflation to a rate of 13 per cent for the year as a whole.²⁵

The immediate consequence of this policy is explained further by Dyker:

A commitment to fiscal and monetary rectitude was proclaimed—backed up by the knowledge that with an effectively fixed exchange rate it becomes virtually impossible to accommodate any degree of inflation. Foreign trade and foreign investment regulations were to be liberalized and a privatization programme set in motion. The package was initially extraordinarily successful in terms of macroeconomic stabilization.²⁶

The immediate popular effect could be seen through the sudden return of popular confidence in the domestic currency. During the decades of high inflation rates,

ordinary people saved in foreign currency. As the majority of workers abroad lived and worked in Germany, most of the savings were in Deutschmarks. Gradually, it almost replaced the dinar as the currency of the common market. Unofficially, some prices were linked to the German currency, to avoid losses caused by inflation and devaluation. The banks were not reliable because it was not possible to take the savings in foreign currencies from the accounts. Markovic's reform changed this attitude.

Livno, a small town in western Bosnia, had a large community working in Germany. During the first ten days of December 1989, prior to Markovic's reform, the local bank, PBS [Privredna Banka Sarajevo], bought only 180DM. During the five days between 20 and 25 December 1989, after Markovic had announced his reforms, the bank bought 650,000DM.²⁷ After the Prime Minister devalued the Yugoslav currency and fixed its value to the German currency one Deutschmark was worth seven dinars. The reforms were judged by ordinary citizens to be unbelievably successful. Most experts shared in the enthusiasm. Markovic had won his battle with inflation, at least for the time being. The reports said:

From the rate of 64 per cent per month in December 1989, inflation fell to 17 per cent per month in January, and to 2.5 per cent per month in March. By April, inflation had been eliminated and prices had actually begun to fall at a rate of -0.2 per cent per month.²⁸

The Federal Government's policy restored belief in the domestic economy to its citizens. During 1989, 13,000 new small and medium-size enterprises were created, but the real business explosion took place in the first quarter of 1990.²⁹ Some of the new companies became very successful, while most of them actually represented a second job for employees who, according to statistics, were paid 42 per cent less in April 1990 than they had been in December 1989.³⁰

The stability of the currency achieved after ten years, the better quality of imported products and opportunities for enterprise made the Prime Minister very popular among the ordinary people, who increasingly supported the reforms. Imports were used to lower domestic prices and to enable further reforms after some companies failed in the market competition. Markovic's popularity grew to such an extent that his visits to the ordinary people were reminiscent of those made during Tito's era. After the League of Communists split up, he was asked to comment. His statement that the government would, nevertheless, continue in office, with their reforms, gave some comfort to the concerned public.³¹ After he had effectively put aside the communist economic doctrine, this statement was a sign of his political independence. The irony is that the ruling party did not, in fact, exist any more while the government continued in office without any significant problems.

Markovic's period in office became a symbol of the consumer society in Yugoslavia. It went so far that even movies and literature, in later years, would

describe the period as 'Markovic's Year'. In one movie made in 1995, for example, a drug addict says that he got hooked during 'Markovic's Year' when heroin was cheap.³² More importantly, his popularity was widespread except amongst some of the ruling politicians, who favoured their own community's short-term interests rather than proper reforms. His monetary policy was firm and restrictive, and therefore did not provide enough cash for spending on losses in the economy. Serbia was the first to object but was joined soon by Slovenia and Croatia. However, their reasons were not similar in economic terms, but in political terms: they did not want a proper state to function at a federal level because it would endanger the authority of the small dictators in their own republics. This kind of conflict became more public by the end of 1990. Thus, soon after the initial positive results of the economic reforms, the federal elite found itself confronted by the republics' elites.

Foreign observers saw Markovic's reforms as a 'clear shift to the market economy and the rule of law', while the Yugoslav dinar was described as 'the first convertible currency in the East [eastern Europe]'.³³ Markovic's policy became very popular in Bosnia-Herzegovina. There were clear signs of economic renewal while he resisted all the challenges and distanced himself from ethnic disputes and nationalists. Therefore, he was acceptable to the vast majority of people in the multi-ethnic society. Predrag Tasic, one of the journalists working for the Federal Government, in his book on this period commented: 'Serbs, Croats and Moslems, all of them, that lived there [in Bosnia-Herzegovina] supported in public Markovic's programme ... The support from Bosnia-Herzegovina was to a such extent strong that Markovic was 100 per cent certain he would win the elections there.'³⁴

The economy was at the roots of the crisis. None of the leaderships tackled these roots. This remained the last chance to save the possibility of a peaceful resolution—if not the country. Some really radical attempt to tackle economic problems could probably have attracted more popular support than the still rising nationalism. The Federal Government took the first step at the end of 1989: however, it was already too late. As the last American Ambassador to Yugoslavia put it: 'Markovic should have come immediately after Tito's death.'³⁵ It was under these circumstances and conditions that a political fight for power in Bosnia-Herzegovina took place in 1990. As Markovic's journalist described the government's view of the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Prime Minister began to prepare for a political battle with his own forces. His economic policy prepared the grounds for his competition with the other political options in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The establishment of his party, like the others, happened mainly in the summer of 1990.

EMERGENCE OF MOBILIZED NATIONALISTS

It was not until 1990 that nationalism, which had not been a significant political force until then, suddenly emerged as a third possible option for mass political

mobilization. During the first half of 1990, the organization of ethnic political parties was still banned, as the ruling circles felt the danger of the possible divisions in the community. The Communist Party was acting according to popular belief at the time. The political weekly, *Danas*, conducted a survey in April and May 1990. Citizens of Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar, 1039 of them, whose ethnic proportion was about the same as in the census of 1981, were asked about the ban on ethnic political parties. In Banja Luka, 81 per cent supported the ban, while the percentage in Sarajevo was 72 per cent and in Mostar 66 per cent. It is interesting that half the Croats surveyed in Mostar were against the ban. As the town was on the edge of western Herzegovina, it was a sign of the Croat nationalists' growing influence in Mostar. Croats in the other two towns did not express the same attitude. This was the strongest difference in political attitudes along ethnic lines in any of the towns. However, only 26 per cent of Croats in Mostar were in favour of Yugoslavia as a confederation. The majority of all Mostar's citizens, 83 per cent, were of the opinion that Yugoslavia should be a federation. Even more Sarajevans (86 per cent) were in favour of a federal Yugoslavia, while the percentage was highest in Banja Luka, at 91 per cent. Almost nobody thought of an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina: 2 per cent in Banja Luka and Sarajevo and only 1 per cent in Mostar.³⁶

According to the citizens surveyed in Banja Luka and Mostar, the setting up of ethnic political parties afforded the greatest danger for the stability of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Banja Luka, 37 per cent of the population were of that opinion, while in Mostar 39 per cent showed the same concern. Sarajevo was not very different, as 31 per cent were of this opinion. However, the main concern of 33 per cent of Sarajevans was nationalism. The economic crisis was on the minds of 33 per cent of the population in Mostar, 25 per cent in Sarajevo and 16.5 per cent in Banja Luka. The other dangers did not attract any significant response. Over 50 per cent of the population believed in the Federal Government as a guarantor of Yugoslav stability. The federal army was seen to be the guarantor by only 25 per cent of the population in Sarajevo and Mostar, while 33 per cent of those in Banja Luka believed strongly in the JNA. The second survey showed that civil war was seen to be a possibility by only 6 per cent in Banja Luka, 3 per cent in Sarajevo and 2 per cent in Mostar.³⁷

The first survey, analysed earlier, which included many smaller towns and was, therefore, more representative of the population of the republic, showed that over half the population saw the possibility of civil war. The second, conducted only in major urban centres, showed just a minor percentage of people to have the same concern. This is a showcase of the great differences existing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, regardless of ethnicity. A more educated population lived in the big urban centres and their support was directed towards the Federal Government and the reforms that had started well. Support for the federal army was associated with a lack of education, though it was stronger among the Serbs. Therefore, force was seen as a possible solution by many of those less educated. They were a majority that reform-minded politicians did not take account of in

time. They made a perfect base for nationalist political parties, which were still officially banned in May 1990.

Meanwhile, regardless of the ban, western Herzegovina was covered by branches of the HDZ. While Sarajevo-based politicians involved themselves in much-publicized theoretical discussions on democracy, pragmatic peasants from western Herzegovina almost finished the job of setting up the party and attracted a wide membership. As it was more of an ethnic movement, that is, the only ideology was ethnic belonging, it was easy for them to take full control of the population in their area from the League of Communists. All they were waiting for by the spring of 1990 was the lifting of the ban on ethnic political organization. Remaining communist officials from the region, officially still in power, either joined secretly the new movement or kept quiet. Even some of the highest-ranking Croats in the republic waited for a shift from communist to nationalist ideology. Jadranko Prlic, then the (communist) Deputy Prime Minister, would again take up this position in government only a few years later, although as a Croat nationalist and not a communist. The very same person would also join the government, even after the war, as part of a non-nationalist alliance. His case, like many others, proves that only pragmatism and a lack of morality are constant, while ideologies, including nationalism, come and go like a fashion cycle.

All the communist leadership did to prevent the strengthening of the nationalist base, at the time, was to pass a Law On Citizens' Associations [Zakon o udruživanju građana]. Article 4 of the law banned ethnic organizing and Article 8 urged the registration in Bosnia-Herzegovina of all parties willing to work in the republic, even if they had already registered outside its borders. Therefore, Tudjman's HDZ was still illegal and quiet in Bosnia-Herzegovina even though the party was ready for elections, with a strong base in the ethnically homogeneous region of western Herzegovina. It was not, however, clear whether ethnic parties would be allowed and the power struggle was left to intra-party factions within the Communist Party. The argument in favour of the ban was that it would lead to ethnic divisions with no foreseeable consequences. The opposed arguments were either nationalistic, that is, a certain nation was endangered by the ban more than the others, and relatively quiet at the time, or democratic, that is, there could be no democracy if there was a ban on any form of political organization.

Although Serbian nationalism was the first to appear and grow strong, popular feelings were not transformed into a political party or any kind of citizens association until the summer of 1990. The others were quicker with this transformation and will be explained in order. By 1990, it was the turn of other forms of nationalism to go public. The first such happened in Duvno, a small town in the western part of the republic, which was home to a Croat majority. The poor population of the region was employed in a few factories that did not produce enough wealth for the community. Their wealth came from Germany, where almost every single family had members working. At the beginning of

1990 several thousand people, many of whom actually lived in Germany, protested in Duvno, ironically, against a new factory plant in the underdeveloped community. The protest was initiated by some articles about the alleged ecological danger presented by the new industrial plant, but the original demands were changed very quickly.

Croatian flags were the only insignia present. This is Croatia' was the universal chant and everyone sang Croat national songs, many of which had been banned during the post-war period because of their nationalist meaning. Their demands were that the name of the town should be changed to what it had been called before the Second World War: Tomislavgrad, after an ancient Croat king. It was not the town's original name but it was certainly the one the population wanted the most. The Croats also had other demands that were targeted at the Serbs. They did not want the Cyrillic alphabet in equal use with the Latin alphabet. The local post office was visited by a mob simply because its director was a Serb. During the Second World War many Serbs from the region were either killed or forced to leave their native villages. Only a few hundred Serbs remained in Duvno by 1990. Nevertheless, the crowd of Croatian nationalists obviously thought there were still too many Serbs in the region.

This example, together with the previous examples of Serbian rampages in some provincial towns, showed that by 1990, the party did not control the whole territory of the republic. Western Herzegovina was clearly under the influence of Zagreb. The rise of nationalism in Serbia initiated another nationalism in Yugoslavia. Croats in western Herzegovina did not have a real reason to react because very few Serbs lived there. Moslems were not, as yet, their target and they presented only a minority in the ethnically rather homogeneous region. This kind of a homogeneous ethnic structure was a rarity in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Franjo Tudjman expressed views which could help explain the Croat nationalists' attitude towards the other ethnic groups: 'Moslems, even when they do not recognize themselves as Croats, never work against the Croats.'³⁸ This was the typical view of a Croat nationalist and it is not necessary to explain that it was far from the truth. This statement, however, offers the basis of the contemporary Croat nationalist doctrine. There were two dominant political ideas developed among the Croats in the nineteenth century. One was the Illirian Movement, advocating the unification of southern Slavs. The other was ultranationalist and regarded Moslems as Croats of a different faith. With the rising nationalism in the late 1980s and the collapse of the system, more nationalist ideas gained in popularity, especially in the underdeveloped regions of Croatia bordering western Herzegovina. Family connections and a shared culture and religion resulted in nationalist strongholds on both sides of the border—which was only a formality. If one looks back at the Second World War, one finds that the most extreme *Ustasas*, the Croat fascists, came from this region. Therefore, their nationalism is a historical constant and ancient hatred can be found in this region.

Elections in Croatia showed that some candidates for office in Zagreb were actually from Herzegovina, while the majority of Croats from the region voted in Croatia. In political terms, it was already a part of Croatia. The influence of Sarajevo was ever less noticeable in towns such as Duvno. One should notice that Duvno and Livno were not geographically part of western Herzegovina, but part of Bosnia. Nonetheless, they were politically a constituent of what would later become the 'Croat Community of HercegBosna'. After May 1990 when the HDZ established itself in power in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina was sandwiched between two opposing nationalisms, which could agree on only one thing—to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina. The First General Assembly of the Croat Democratic Union in February 1990, revealed all the dangers. Their leader, Franjo Tudjman offered his views on Bosnia-Herzegovina: 'Economic-communicative and spiritually-civilizing unification of the Socialist Republic of Croatia and the Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina makes up natural and integral geopolitical unity. They are acquainted with togetherness by historical destiny.'³⁹

The party that held this ideology was marked in the media as 'the party of dangerous intentions'. The intentions towards Bosnia-Herzegovina were, therefore, quite clear from the beginning. If this was the view of the leader, who was regarded as a relative moderate within the party, one could assume what the opinion of the radical wing of the party was. Future events proved their expansionist intentions towards Bosnia-Herzegovina. Many Croats in western Herzegovina supported the HDZ from the beginning and the first branches were set up there long before the official approval for ethnic political associations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, a mass willingness to set up and join the nationalist party existed in certain regions. The next step was to establish a network for the organization through a credible leadership. In the case of the HDZ, the leaders were divided between those who were based in Sarajevo and Herzegovinians directly connected to Zagreb.

The HDZ used the clergy not only to help them in their political work but also, effectively, to set up the party's infrastructure and to find leaders. Davor Perinovic, the first president of the HDZ of Bosnia-Herzegovina, claims in his memoirs that Ante Jelic, a Catholic priest in Sarajevo, actually persuaded him to join the HDZ. He was the one who brought membership forms and party propaganda to Perinovic. When Perinovic hesitated and expressed his dilemma over whether to join the HDZ or some other Croat political party, the priest told him, 'You know, Davor. It may be the best solution if you join Tudjman.'⁴⁰

Soon after this meeting in the summer of 1989, Perinovic was invited to Zagreb to meet HDZ leaders and receive instructions. The HDZ was already in place in western Herzegovina but the Zagreb leadership was looking for someone respectable in Sarajevo to lead the whole organization in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They used the Catholic clergy for this task, as the Catholic ranks were already being used to attract membership in other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia itself. There were no problems in attracting the rural

population who regularly attended mass, but urban intellectuals still hesitated. Again the priest, Jelic, was the one to suggest a list of people who could become HDZ leaders in Sarajevo.⁴¹

He was not the only member of the Catholic clergy servicing HDZ: Perinovic claims that after he joined the party's ranks, he met many other priests.⁴² Later electoral campaigns, both in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, showed that the clergy in general chose one political option. Many priests were either open propagators or even HDZ candidates for political duties.⁴³ It must be said that the official church never admitted, and actually denied, any political activity. However, events show that the situation was really different. Perinovic even claims that when he had some doubts over whether to leave the HDZ, he went to confess at a local church. The priest told him that he must stay in the party and that 'that was in the interest of Catholicism and the Croat people'.⁴⁴ Perinovic goes on to confirm the role of the Catholic clergy and describe how it worked: 'All our trips abroad were organized and very often financed by Croat Catholic missions. Catholic priests organized political meetings for us. They also collected money for us.'⁴⁵

This was still a time in Bosnia-Herzegovina when many intellectuals believed that communism would survive and that democracy would not come, at least not soon. This view, and fear for inter-ethnic relations if nationalists set up political parties, certainly contributed to the lack of strong and respected intellectuals or public figures in the nationalist ranks. This was especially the case at the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990. Perinovic described the situation: 'All Croat intellectuals in Sarajevo whom I was able to contact and who meant something and were respected in their communities were absolutely against any kind of changes. They hesitated when any kind of political activity was mentioned.'⁴⁶

In January 1990, the HDZ still could not attract a sufficient number of members to set up their official branch in Sarajevo and only had an initial committee of less than ten people at the meeting on 18 January. There was a significant difference in the political attitudes of the urban and rural communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. While ethnic politics already played a major role in the rural areas, it was more a matter of academic discussion among intellectuals in cosmopolitan urban centres.

Religion was a crucial factor in the determination of Bosnian ethnic groups. Historically, the clergy of all ethnic groups played an important role in setting up the political agenda, although only during the periods when it was allowed. These moments were rare in the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina and especially during the communist reign when religion was put aside. It was only at the end of 1989 that some religious programmes were actually broadcast live by the state's electronic media. Religious ceremonies became part of social life and were no longer discriminated against. The question, therefore, might be asked why religion was so important when it had been out of the mainstream for such a long period. However, as Cornelia Sorabji has rightly found, 'Bosnia's Muslims, Serbs and Croats are indigenous Slavs and linguistically all but indistinguishable

so that religion and religiously derived customs are the major thing dividing them.⁴⁷

The origins of this division are noted in the work of Tone Bringa who states:

Apart from bringing their religion, Islam, Osmanlian Turks had established an administrative structure, a system of *millet*, by which belonging to one 'nation' was determined. It was not done by common language, clearly determined common territory, a united view of common history, or by ethnicity (i.e., common inheritance).⁴⁸

Hence the importance of religious leaders and the clergy in a period when ethnic politics played a major role. Processes of democratization and liberalization, initiated into society in the late 1980s, allowed religious communities more freedom and space for influence and their importance grew with the approaching elections.

A second question was whether the clergy could influence substantial parts of society who had lived for so long, very often their whole lives, under communism and almost without proper religious teaching. Some studies, dated just before the great rise in the influence of religious circles, tried to state society's attitude towards religion:

The religiousness in Catholic regions was always very high and was falling slowly. It was different in Orthodox regions: rapid atheization and secularization were characteristics until the 1980s when the trend was stopped by the crisis. The rise of religiousness was judged to involve around one sixth of the population.⁴⁹

This expert's view explains the general attitude of the population. It was never really possible to conduct a proper survey because many people would not speak openly about their religiousness. Although it was no longer necessary to be a member of the League of Communists to make a career, many still hesitated to admit to having religion. The regime in Belgrade allowed the Orthodox Church to step into the offensive, and later used it to attract more followers among Serbs outside Serbia. Traditionally strong religious beliefs among Catholics added to the growing trend among the Orthodox. Furthermore, the Islamic community and religiousness among Moslems was rising. Taking all these facts into account one could, rather, agree with another local expert's opinion on religiousness: 'According to different sociological research, one could conclude that a slightly larger half of the Yugoslav community is religious.'⁵⁰

Religion, therefore, was important in everyday life. As politics entered the everyday life of the ordinary citizen, religion also became involved. This would not have happened if the system had not been in crisis and forced to change itself, or at least change some of its attitudes. The attitude towards religion among Bosnian Moslems was probably the most problematic. The very name of

this ethnic group is religious, but this does not mean that all the Moslems in Bosnia-Herzegovina are religious. During the war in the 1990s, Moslem intellectual and political elites opted to change their name to 'Bosniak'. This term was accepted by the majority of Moslems. However, foreigners sometimes confuse this term with the term 'Bosnian' which covers all ethnic groups. For the purposes of this work, because the official name of the ethnic group during the period covered was 'Moslem', the old name has been used. In her work on Bosnia's Moslems, Cornelia Sorabji stated:

Unsurprisingly, in terms of religious observance individuals and families vary. A small minority at one end is strictly observant, a percentage at the other is out-and-out atheist and the vast majority are somewhere in between; agnostic, humorous on the topic of religion but willing to participate when socially necessary or at least to respect other people's participation, or believing in God and occasionally practising but generally negligent.⁵¹

A similar relation between the nation and religiousness could be found among the Serbs and the Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, the vast majority of people 'somewhere in between' played a key role; stronger influence over these groups meant a stronger religious community. As the ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina were differentiated along religious lines, it also meant a stronger national-ethnic group. The rise of nationalism gave a major role to ethnic politics and, hence, the importance of all the developments within the religious communities in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the battle for political votes began.

The clergy of all three faiths had behaved differently under the communists. The leadership of the Islamic Religious Community [Islamska vjerska zajednica] had been collaborating, though only to certain extent, with the communist rulers for years. The Orthodox Church was in a similar position. Hence the schism within the Serbs' Orthodox Church, which left those in the country under the jurisdiction of the communist-approved clergy. Many of the faithful abroad attended the masses of the other group, which organized themselves into another Serbian Orthodox Church soon after the Second World War. The Roman Catholic Church never went along easily with the rulers, and their organization was probably stronger because of this. It also certainly had stronger protectors abroad as the Vatican was more influential than other religious communities.

The Islamic Religious Community actually experienced further growth under the communists, though the communists still preferred non-religious people in the party ranks and would change this only just before the elections. One should bear in mind that the authorities did not tolerate a single sign not only of nationalism, but of the relatively stronger expression of ethnic belonging. As religion was the main distinction, or the basis for it, people who were religious were considered suspect more often than others. Nonetheless, during Tito's reign,

723 new objects for Moslem prayer were built while 551 were renovated.⁵² The Islamic leadership collaborated with the regime to some extent and was used as a showcase for the state's friends from many non-aligned Islamic countries. It was they who provided financial resources for the reconstruction and the development of mosques.

Despite this relative growth, at the end of 1988, a split occurred within the Islamic Religious Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The imams from the rural areas were upset about their financial situation and also with the role of their leadership. Communist leaders for several decades had managed to influence the election of the Islamic supreme leader in Yugoslavia, who was based in Sarajevo. Despite the financial resources, the imams were not paid better than the rest of society. Thus, they had two reasons to rebel. Some 1,300 imams came to the Sarajevo-based Islamic headquarters, while 130 of them attended an unofficial protest at the Islamic Theological Faculty. They repeated their demands and set up new deadlines.⁵³ On 14 February 1989, the protest was repeated once more.

Basically, the lower clergy wanted a more radical leadership. This meant a break with many ties with the state and the independent election of the leadership in their own religious community. Finally, in April 1989, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Religious Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia resigned.⁵⁴ Similar pressure was put upon the Supreme Leader of all Yugoslav Moslems, Muhamed Mujic. Later he also retired, only two years after being inaugurated. His replacement came from outside Bosnia-Herzegovina for the first time: a Macedonian Moslem, Jakub Selimoski, became the leader.

The significance of these events was a clear sign that the imams wanted independence from the state. This meant closer ties with more radical circles in the Islamic world, without the state's interference, through the leadership in their own religious community. Therefore, the calls for the resignation of individuals actually meant calls for change in official policy and the behaviour of the imams and community. They wanted to become more involved in everyday politics, which they very soon did, developing close ties to the Moslem political party.

It is possible to link the turmoil in the Islamic Religious Community and the early appearance of Moslem nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina. For example, a member of the commission established to investigate the work of the two supreme leaders within the Islamic Religious Community was Salem Sabic, who later became one of the founders and leaders of the Moslem nationalists' Party of Democratic Action, SDA [Stranka demokratske akcije].⁵⁵ The pre-electoral campaign proved the existence of a connection between the party and clergy. The imams would either lead or just help establish local party branches in more remote communities. They appeared regularly at all the important SDA conventions and other meetings, while avoiding any appearance at other parties' gatherings. At meetings in the mosques, they did not only pray, just as the clergy in other religious communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina did not, but they actually suggested which political idea was closest to believers. Thus, religious leaders

certainly contributed heavily to the rise of nationalism and consequently influenced the electoral results, as Senad Pecanin witnessed:

Don Zivko Kustic said publicly at the workshop I chaired in Sarajevo in 1994, that the [Catholic] Church had helped the HDZ. The priests at the masses were telling: 'Everybody should vote according to their own beliefs and I will vote for HDZ.' The same situation was with SDA and SDS whose establishing was based to a great extent on mosquechurch infrastructure. The priests and imams were in the front rows at all meetings. Religious iconography was omnipresent...⁵⁶

Alija Izetbegovic had been freed from prison at the end of 1988. Prisoners sentenced for breaching the law, according to the notorious Article 133 of the Criminal Law, were pardoned at that time by the Federal Presidency. However, there is absolutely no proof that he actually played any role or had any connection with the events in the Islamic Religious Community during 1989. The only certainty is that the new, more radical, religious leadership was of more possible use for political purposes than the previous one.

It was in March 1990 that Izetbegovic and a group of his followers announced an initiative to form the Party of Democratic Action. The name was chosen because of the ban on ethnic parties, thus leading to speculations, until the founding session on 26 May, about a possible name change. The expected name was the Yugoslav Moslem Organization (JMO) to follow in the steps of a pre-war Moslem party, which had the strongest following among Yugoslav Moslems. The history of Moslem ethnic politics during both Yugoslavias shows its pro-Yugoslav character, with a major concern for the Moslem population and its interests. When Serbian troops entered Sarajevo at the end of the First World War they 'were greeted as liberators'.⁵⁷ During the first Yugoslavia, Moslems regularly, overwhelmingly, voted for the JMO [Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija]. Donia and Fine, in their research, rightly connected it with a sense of identity:

The number of votes for the YMO [JMO] from one election to another varied by only 20% over seven years, a testimony to the solid foundations of Bosnian Muslim identity and the stability of Muslim voting patterns... The YMO played out the historic role of the Bosnian Muslims as a swing group in coalition politics, typically supporting the center against centrifugal tendencies.⁵⁸

This shows no separatist tendencies among Moslem politicians and also their clear support of the federal state. This was the case in the past with the JMO advocating Moslem interests. After a communist spell with no ethnic politics there seemed to be a continuation in the programmes of the SDA. However, the change in the situation and the more aggressive nationalism of the others by

1990, probably moved the new political leaders towards more radical politics. At the time of setting up the party, SDA activists were very cautious.

A fortnight before the SDA's founding session, another Moslem organization was established by Muhamed Filipovic. The Forum for the Protection of the Rights of Moslems attracted many intellectuals, but was effectively used as a platform for Filipovic's political work. He, like many others, was not determined enough to join the Moslem party but still wanted an opening to connect himself with the SDA. At the time he was known to be close to the ranks of the League of Communists, which still had not decided whether to go ahead with a multiparty system or to try to reorganize itself and keep power. Those who were more interested in their own political influence than ideas tried to keep all their options open. Intellectuals of all the ethnic groups behaved in a similar manner and, consequently, the nationalist parties suffered from a lack of respected intellectuals in their ranks.

The political organizing of the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina had a similar development to that of the Croats. Their initiatives and logistics were also imported. The Serbs' nationalist agenda for the expansion of ethnic space was marked on many occasions. Various celebrations were used for provoking stronger feelings of ethnic belonging. The space left by the lack of politicians taking prime seats at such gatherings was filled by the clergy. The Orthodox clergy became important again, after a pause of almost half a century. Possible followers and a nationalist ideology were already in place but the political organization was missing. Thus, the feelings of ordinary rural Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina were prepared and a political organization was the next step.

A party that would follow the rhetoric of Milosevic's nationalistic Communist Party was still awaited in the middle of 1990. A possible explanation might be that Milosevic was still waiting for a possible change within the communist ranks in Sarajevo. If they changed their minds and sided with him, there would be no need for a political party and they would all continue to govern in the single-party system. He was the last in Yugoslavia to allow and organize multiparty elections. However, by June 1990, it became clear, even to him, that the communists in Bosnia-Herzegovina would rather follow the example of Slovenia and Croatia. It is an irony that the political party of the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina was set up with the help of Serbs from Croatia. Nonetheless, behind the scenes Milosevic was directing policy and policy makers. He even let the other ethnic groups set up their parties before giving a signal, in July 1990, that it was high time for Serbs to get their own political party in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

One must bear in mind that the role of the clergy in stirring up feelings of ethnic belonging was not universal. It is more appropriate to consider the role of individuals, although there were a rather large number of them, as the official leaders continued with their usual rhetoric. In Banja Luka, on 10 October 1989, two local Catholic bishops, Franjo Komarica and Alfred Pihler, and the Orthodox episcop, Jefrem Milutinovic, sent a public letter to believers in which they called for mutual tolerance, peace and love. The letter was published in the Catholic

and Orthodox press, but it did not change the minds of the readers. The people ignored common Bosnian-Herzegovinian heritage and opted for what distinguished them. Different faiths were used for nation building and thus it happened that all the Moslems were of Islamic faith, or their predecessors had been of this faith. The same criteria worked for the Croats and the Catholic faith and the Serbs and the Orthodox faith. One could hardly find any more differences as Miljenko Jergovic, a Bosnian writer put it:

The peoples who live in Bosnia-Herzegovina (I mean Serbs and Croats) are differentiated from their peoples who live in their native countries to that extent that their cultural and political self-reliance is above all connected with Bosnia-Herzegovina. A confirmation for this could be found in many aspects: ethnology, language and historical fact that, in this century, there was no recorded emigration from Bosnia-Herzegovina except the economic one and the modern political one into which all peoples were forced. In this sense, it seems that recent claims about endangered Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina are extremely perfidious.⁵⁹

Those who made such claims found a basis for their arguments in some simple facts taken from the ethnological and linguistic heritage. However, according to the census of 1981, some 266,685 Serbs had left Bosnia-Herzegovina and most of them (215,502) had settled in Serbia. The same pattern could be found among Croats, because out of the 146,045 Croats that had left Bosnia-Herzegovina, 130,135 of them had found a place in Croatia. At the same time, only 48,304 Serbs and 24,515 Croats had immigrated into Bosnia-Herzegovina. The situation with the Moslems was different: 26,999 had left the republic while 26,905 had come into it. Most of those who left went to Croatia, while most of the newcomers were from Serbia.⁶⁰ These details show that, after all, both Serbs and Croats from Bosnia-Herzegovina had a tendency, for a long time prior to the rise of nationalism, to look towards Serbia and Croatia respectively in search of a better or more secure life. If one takes off a percentage from these numbers for those who left for purely professional reasons, there is still a huge proportion of people who actually took the first opportunity to settle in more ethnically homogeneous places. One cannot determine the percentages, but this was certainly the case. The tendency among Moslems actually proves this view because their migration routes took the opposite direction to that of the Serbs and the Croats.

Thus members of all ethnic groups tended to live in communities where the majority of the population was of their own ethnicity. This fact was often used by the nationalists. It also was an argument against those who supported a unique Bosnian culture made up of three ethnic groups. Advocates of this argument were of two kinds. There were those who simply did not see any major difference between the ethnic groups living in Bosnia-Herzegovina, apart from those based on religious differences. Even these differences, however, interacted with each other very often. The second group of supporters of a unique Bosnian-

Herzegovinian culture was made up of those in favour of Moslem hegemony. They agreed with the previous group, but tended to give it a more Moslem character based on the largest ethnic group.

The fact was that members of all three ethnic groups were considered by the outsiders in Yugoslavia to be Bosnians (Bosanci) or Herzegovinians (Hercegovci), regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation. Thus, for example, Serbs from Serbia regarded Bosnian Serbs as Bosnians.⁶¹ In this sense, as well as sharing a common dialect, literature and customs, Bosnian culture existed and was different from that in the neighbouring republics. One should also note, as further proof, that Herzegovinians of all ethnic groups used a relatively distinctive dialect compared to the Bosnians. Some customs were also distinctive. Thus, there was a regional sense of identity that unified ethnic groups. Bogdan Denitch found from his personal experience:

Writers like E.P.Thompson have long stressed the intimate link between communitarian localism and class consciousness. And yet during the years I have lived and worked in Yugoslavia, it had seemed that a new, heterogeneous, popular culture was emerging among the young and among the urban workers. Multiethnic Sarajevo was the major source of popular music and culture. The current wave of nationalism strikes me as the revenge of provincial language and history teachers and all who insist that they must preserve that which is specific to their nation.⁶²

However, some differences amongst Bosnians (or Herzegovinians) were increasingly underlined in the periods of crisis. Post-Tito Yugoslavia was certainly such a period and despite the common culture, as described by many authors, including Denitch, people tended to declare their culture separate. There was also a clear difference between the urban and rural communities. The safest conclusion would be to describe people living in the cities as followers of a unique Bosnian culture, while in the rural areas more attention was paid to differences. Even when considering mixed marriages, one would find a huge proportion of them in the cities and only a few in the villages.⁶³ At the time, inter-ethnic relations were very bad in Yugoslavia and the question had arisen of how this was reflected in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Branga described the discussion:

The sense appeared that, if Bosnia wanted to survive as a state, its citizens had to be identified as a nation whose name was directly connected with territory. There were disagreements about whom to include and whether it was possible to have one state with three 'nations'.⁶⁴

Religion was what separated them. As Gellner put it, a nationalist principle was 'one culture, one state',⁶⁵ but in this case, the principle should be read: 'one religion, one culture, one state'. Bosnian culture was separate from Serbian and Croatian culture, but many Serbs and Croats preferred the status of diaspora to

their respective core countries. The only factor to connect them was religion, either Orthodox or Catholic, because all other factors such as language and culture connected them with Moslems and the other ethnic groups of Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, the beginning of ethnic political organizing and the pre-electoral campaign underlined every single difference among the ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

NOTES

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19. *Danas*, 24 October 1989, pp. 8–9.
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22. Sekulic, Dusan, *Danas*, 11 July 1989, pp. 7–9.
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27. Dalmacija, Slobodna, quoted in *Danas*, 02 January 1990, p. 33.
 28. Bartlet, 'Economic Change in Yugoslavia', p. 43.
 29. Ibid., p.44.
 30. Ibid., p. 43.
 31. Ante Markovic to the press after the 14th Congress of SKJ; TV Sarajevo broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
 32. Serbian movie *Lepa sela lepo gore*, directed by Srdjan Dragojevic.
 33. Corriere Della Sera and El Pais, quoted in *Borba*, 20 December 1989, p. 6.
 34. Tasic, P., *Kako je ubijena druga Jugoslavija* (Skopje: author's publication, 1994), p. 209.
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6

The Electoral Campaign

The political situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina by the middle of 1990 showed the certainty of multiparty elections but the conditions, competitors and even the legal system for the elections were not determined yet. The Communist Party was still in power officially but, in reality, there was a power vacuum. As a sign of their commitment to democracy and change, but also a sign of their weakness, they gave up control over the state. Instead of releasing public pressure, the power vacuum forced them to accept all the changes in society and announce proper political competition and elections in the republic. As already described, new political parties had been set up, but the main issue still remained concerning whether to lift the ban on ethnic political parties. The power vacuum and the new freedoms were used by nationalists, who gave up waiting for the ban to be lifted and actually set up their parties in the late spring and early summer of 1990. Thus, it became just a matter of recognizing reality and transforming already *de facto* organized ethnic parties into their *de jure* existence.

In this chapter, I trace the setting up of the nationalist movements and the ways in which they influenced society through growing communal tension and the electoral campaign. On the other side stood their main competitors, the former holders of power, the reformed communists and the reformists. Even right up to the elections, on 18 November, ethnic hatred in the communities had not prevailed, although the number of ethnic incidents increased. Indeed, the nationalist movements supported each other and insisted that they could coexist. However, various signs and arguments could be traced back to the pre-electoral campaign.

GROUND RULES

The communists separated themselves from the state governing bodies. Some minor political parties were set up but were without direct, if any, influence, while the major political parties, that is, nationalists and the reformists, publicly announced their intentions of running in the future elections. Media access was free for many liberal-minded intellectuals who opposed, as a matter of principle, the prolonged ban on ethnic political parties. Even the communists were not clear in their statements on this subject. Parliament and the government did not

know whether to follow old instructions dating from the period when the communists still held power, or to follow the mainstream political discussions in society, which led in an opposite direction. During this period, an official ban on ethnic political parties was being discussed in the republic's governing bodies. The reality forced them to accept the inevitability of recognizing rights with regard to ethnic political organization. Thus, a delegate in the republic's parliament, Muhamed Nuhic, said, 'Simply, there cannot be guarantees for all human and citizen's rights and, at the same time, a ban to prevent the citizen from expressing his ethnic belonging and feeling through political organizing.'¹

The nationalist leaders also involved themselves in public discussions, thus contributing to the pressure to lift the ban. Alija Izetbegovic argued, The solution is in freedom and democracy but not in restrictions and bans.'² A newspaper report from western Herzegovina described the whole region as flooded with the symbols of the HDZ and the very cautious approach of the locals.³ However, the reality was shown by the views of a local judge in Listica, Ivan Brekalo:

Possible extremes would disappear very soon after the formation of ethnic parties. It is stupid and there is no logic that ethnic parties exist everywhere in Yugoslavia but not in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Furthermore, I claim that, due to such party organizing, the people would live here in better understanding.⁴

Finally, independent intellectuals, who contributed a great deal to the democratization of society, argued along the same lines. It was not just purely a question of the banning of ethnic parties, the whole consequent system needed to be discussed. The law prescribed the obligatory proportional representation of ethnic groups in Parliament and in all the state's institutions. Zdravko Grebo argued against this notion:

...This is a political nonsense. It understands two things. Firstly, the formation of ethnic voting bodies, which is impossible without ethnic political parties. Even with them, it is a question of whether all members of one ethnic community will vote for their 'ethnic candidates'.⁵

This kind of dilemma was omnipresent in public discussions. The reality was that ethnic parties were already present, the state apparatus had no will or strength to suppress their activities and the party in power feared further accusations of being undemocratic if it influenced the decision of the Constitutional Court on whether or not the ban was legal. Thus the conditions under which the court worked were without political pressure, although Parliament suggested that '...the ban on ethnic political organizing does not restrict the freedoms and rights of the citizens. Instead, organizing on an ethnic basis would mean the prevention of members of other ethnic groups from freely joining the organization'.⁶

Despite the reservations about ethnic organizing expressed by the governing bodies and some intellectuals, it had become more popular by the time the Constitutional Court made its decision. The Presidency's proposal for a referendum to let the people decide whether to allow ethnic parties was the last step in defending the ban and a flirtation with democracy. The Constitutional Court worked for several days before reaching its decision on 12 June 1990 that the ban was not legal and, therefore, should be lifted.⁷ The next step was supposed to be made by Parliament but it still hesitated and even tried to opt for a referendum, despite the Constitutional Court's decision. The delegates, however, did not turn out for the session on 23 June and the decision was postponed.

These activities, or rather the lack of them, went on despite the fact that the major nationalist parties had already been formed and gone public. This fact only proved further the existence of a power vacuum. The peaceful coexistence of the three ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina was not endangered by the ethnic parties. Ethnic incidents had started to occur even before their establishment. With the presence of nationalists in political life, ethnic incidents had increased but were still manageable, although they were exploited to a great extent for rhetorical purposes by the nationalists. The problem, and real danger, of the ethnic political parties lay in the possibility that they would form coalitions that would exclude one of the groups. That is, that two of the parties would join against the third.

During the end of July and the beginning of August the republican Parliament tried to make a decision on the amendments to the constitution by which a new multiparty system and elections, including ethnic and religious parties, would be allowed. The Parliament also took a decision to have two chambers in future: the Chamber of Citizens with 130 members, elected on a proportional basis with the republic divided into seven electoral units, and the Chamber of Districts, with 110 members.⁸ These would be elected on a majority basis with one representative for every district, regardless of the population. Thus the 195,139 citizens of Banja Luka would have one representative, as would the 4,162 citizens of Ljubinje.⁹ The parties did not seem very concerned about these decisions.

The proposed future structure of the Presidency came under the scrutiny of the nationalist parties. Three Moslems, two Serbs, one Croat and one Yugoslav, or a member of some other ethnic group, were to become members of the collective presidential institution. The decision was changed later and it was proposed that there should be two members of each ethnic group and one of the others, that is, Yugoslav or a minority representative. At the same time, the election results would be valid only if the ethnic structure of those elected was in the range of 15 per cent of the last ethnic census. All these arrangements were meant to secure the equality of all peoples living in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The elections on 18 November, both at a local and the republic level, were finally announced on 7 August 1990, by Parliament Speaker Zlatan Karavdic. The real political

competition and accelerated political and social developments really only started in the summer of 1990.

THE PARTIES: THEIR FORMATION, STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES

The communists began their pre-electoral campaign on 25 May. They staged a mass meeting in Sarajevo's city centre under the banner 'Bosnia Said—No' (they meant no to nationalism and ethnic divisions). It was attended by tens of thousands of people. The slogans included: 'Down with the attackers on Comrade Tito', 'Long live Bosnia-Herzegovina and the JNA', 'We will die before giving up Bosnia' and 'Death to nationalism, we want togetherness'.¹⁰ The intention of the meeting was, it seemed, to please everyone. It proved that the firm roots of Titoism still existed in Bosnia-Herzegovina and that the communists had a strong following. The date of the official birthday of the late leader, Tito, once celebrated and later abolished as a holiday, was obviously still in the minds and hearts of many. After a long period, the communists showed their strength on the streets. This was also proof of the strongly organized network of the League of Communists, despite the decrease in membership and its obvious weaknesses. It was also the case that they were still the only party with an organized network throughout the republic. These issues and the power vacuum created by them in the republic probably led some authors to misinterpret the state of the party. Noel Malcolm claims, 'In Bosnia, as in most of the other republics, the Communist Party had disintegrated in early 1990 and a set of nationalist or national parties had been formed.'¹¹ The meeting and the forthcoming electoral campaign clearly showed that the communists were still well organized. They were weaker than they had been a year earlier, but it is bold, and in essence untrue, to claim that they dissolved themselves. After all, in the other republics they also survived and even won some elections, although as much reformed parties. They were aware of the forthcoming political competition, although not confident enough to set the election date. This failure to set a date showed their weakness.

The communists showed clearly their major goals for the elections. Strong opposition to any kind of ethnic division was underlined at the meeting and in all their future public statements. They also started building up the image of a charismatic leadership that was powerful enough to prevent the destabilization of the country by movements originating in Serbia and Croatia. Their economic policy consisted of support for the Federal Government and they did not enter into discussions until Markovic formed his own party. Even then they continued their support of the economic reforms. The communists anticipated the dangers of nationalist forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but were unable to produce an argument convincing enough to dash the claims of the nationalists that a non-ethnic party could not protect particular ethnic interests.

The newly formed multi-ethnic parties also directed their attacks at the communists as a symbol of failure. Thus, despite all their efforts, the communists had little chance of winning the elections. They were the major anti-nationalist party; therefore, people who were fed up with communists had a simple choice—to vote for nationalists. Furthermore, parts of the population also voted for nationalists, or joined them, because of their strong ethnic beliefs. Thus, all parties targeted the former basis of communist support. The electoral results and political developments in neighbouring republics simply meant that the circumstances were more favourable for nationalist support.

The communists started early with their propaganda by organizing the meeting and inviting members to stay in their ranks and not to join even their closest allies, such as the former Socialist Alliance of Working People, who had reorganized themselves into a political party.¹² The alliance was desperate to remain the party of the masses and they knew they were losing members. In June their leader claimed that the party had a membership of 350,000, but this is unlikely in view of what we know was happening in certain regions.¹³ In Duvno, the former Socialist Alliance had only 12 members and the communists had 900 members; however, the HDZ had 10,000 members.¹⁴ Thus, in rural Bosnia-Herzegovina, the communists were no longer a party of the masses—the nationalists had replaced them.

The remaining core of left-wing supporters was further divided by the formation of Markovic's party. The Prime Minister's party was not only a threat to the communists: the nationalists were also faced with the problem of how many of their own potential supporters would be attracted by multiethnic political parties. The communists were attacked by everybody and were expected to lose even more members and supporters, but were still a strong party. Markovic's party was dangerous for the nationalists because they could not be identified with the previous regime, as was the case with the reformed communists, and because his economic programme was successful and he was personally very popular in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Despite Markovic's successful economic reforms, the political situation in the Federation threatened to lose him political support, as the right-wing parties now in power in Slovenia and Croatia argued for secessionist policies. Moreover, Milosevic's faction had raised its voice even earlier against the Federal Government. Thus, Bosnia was Markovic's last chance to involve himself in the political competition and, by winning it, to build the road for peaceful economic and political reforms in the whole of Yugoslavia.

At the meeting of 100,000 people, that gathered on Mt. Kozara near Banja Luka, Markovic called on individuals and organizations to join his party. He did this on 29 July, when the anniversary of the partisan uprising during the Second World War was celebrated (the actual anniversary was two days earlier). This Bosnian region had suffered huge losses during the war and was known for its partisan tradition. Serbs made up the majority of the population and this fact was used by Serb nationalists, who often argued that Markovic wanted to take Serb

votes while he showed no intention of getting the votes of the Croats, Slovenes and Moslems.¹⁵ Markovic's party was founded after the elections in Slovenia and Croatia and this gave some weight to Serbian arguments.

In fact, Markovic wanted a broad coalition that would support his economic policy. He hoped to attract whole parties.¹⁶ The movement was named 'The Alliance of the Reformist Forces of Yugoslavia—for Bosnia-Herzegovina', although they were popularly known as the 'reformists'. His speech was followed by the self-organizing of local branches in most of the communities. Markovic's invitation for people to self-organize caused a lot of trouble for the future party because there were several cases of two or even more local branches which had self-organized in the same town or village. The communists, who wanted to hit back at Markovic, sponsored some of them.

Another problem was the reformists' leadership in Sarajevo: they had very little influence over the situation outside the capital. However, the great enthusiasm and eagerness of many people to join the party during the summer of 1990 made Markovic's Reformist Party the favourite for the elections, at least according to the media. Support for Markovic was also popular because it meant that one was seen not as a nationalist nor as a beneficiary of the old regime's privileges. When it came to actual voting behaviour, however, the story was completely different. The reformists were the only party with a clear economic programme—which was actually the Federal Government's programme of economic reforms. Their problem was a lack of political determination because their leader wanted to embrace a very wide spectrum of political opinions. In this sense they were close to the ethnic political factions, although their real intention was the formation of a multi-ethnic movement. Therefore, all political options were kept open. With the rise of nationalism and a different approach to the future of the common state, the issue of Yugoslavia, as a federal or confederal state, was central. All other constitutional issues were hardly mentioned during this period.

The reformists never took a clear position on this issue despite the fact that their political programme could only be achieved in a federal context. The term itself was rather unpopular, especially among Croats because of Milosevic's demands for a stronger federation. During the pre-electoral campaign, all the major political parties committed themselves to a federal Yugoslavia except for the reformists, who refused to comment, and the HDZ, which favoured confederation, as did their leaders in Zagreb.¹⁷

It was only on 5 September that the reformists became organized officially in Bosnia-Herzegovina. While the nationalists staged constituent sessions attended by thousands, the reformists invited only 500 people. They were able to attract many intellectuals who respected individualism, but not the masses who wanted strength to be shown in numbers. Markovic was a strong leader but he did not manage to choose a similar personality in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The provisional leader of the Initiative Committee, Dzemail Sokolovic, was a very left-wing politician who was the last challenger of Durakovic's leadership in the

Communist Party. Therefore, he obviously did not fit the position of leader of the Reformists. Markovic spent the night before the session mostly with Zdravko Grebo trying to persuade him to become the leader in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹⁸ After he definitely declined to accept the offer, the question of who should be leader was left to another session, almost a fortnight later, when Nenad Kecmanovic was elected.¹⁹

This illustrated the problems within the party. Nothing appeared in public, but it was obvious that Markovic wanted someone else to lead his party in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They were already late in officially organizing themselves. They also became the main target of all the other parties, who exercised the weight of their own political criticism whenever they talked about the reformists. Regardless of their internal situation, the Reformist Party always showed unity in public. One could hardly imagine former leftwing communists, reform-minded former communists, dissidents in the former regime and real anti-communists to be in the same party. Nevertheless, they were the 'Alliance of the Reform Forces of Yugoslavia for Bosnia-Herzegovina'. The only thing they had in common was a belief in the federal Prime Minister.

As the question of future constitutional arrangements in Yugoslavia was never answered openly by the reformists, other ideological issues were also left aside. This was obviously a strategy adopted by Markovic's cabinet in the hope that they would attract a wide spectrum of supporters. He was a charismatic leader and it was likely that he thought this was enough for the party's recognition in public. To some extent he might have been right as his popularity, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was proven on several occasions. Thus, he used his personal virtue to cover the party's weaknesses.

The basis for all ethnic politics was widened by the disaffected younger generations and the proletariat in the larger centres. Harsh living conditions contributed heavily to the criticism by the new generation. Disappointment with the system was so high that one third of the youth surveyed in Bosnia-Herzegovina declared themselves to be against the system. One quarter was confused. In a survey of 500 youngsters, aged between 14 and 27, those for and against the system stood in a ratio of 1:1.6.²⁰ The sharp rise of nationalism contributed to growing dissatisfaction and unrest.

The first nationalist political party to be set up officially was the Moslem Party of Democratic Action (SDA). Just a day after the communists' meeting in Sarajevo, the SDA [Stranka demokratske akcije] was founded under the leadership of Alija Izetbegovic. The ethnic character of the party's name was dropped because of the still existing ban on such parties at the time of its formation. The founding session was attended by well over a thousand carefully selected members and many guests, amongst whom were the representatives of the HDZ from both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Leaders of some of the newly formed parties in Serbia declined to appear, despite their invitation. A Slovene nationalist representative, Joze Pucnik, attracted huge applause when he said that, 'Yugoslavia will be a confederation or there will be no Yugoslavia'.²¹

However, Izetbegovic explained that the SDA wanted '...Yugoslavia to be a modern federation'.²²

The integrity and autonomy of Bosnia-Herzegovina within Yugoslavia had been a major characteristic of Moslem ethnic politics since the creation of the Southern Slavs' state. The Yugoslav Moslem Organization, the biggest and the only relevant Moslem party in the first Yugoslavia, led this policy.²³ It was very likely that the SDA wanted to follow this policy also; hence, Izetbegovic's view was nothing new. The preservation of the federal state, its integrity and a large degree of self-rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina, were to be the consequences of a 'modern federation'.

More problems were caused by a speech by Dalibor Brozovic, an HDZ leader from Zagreb, who stated that 'defending Bosnia on the river Drina [border to Serbia] is also a defence of Croatia'.²⁴ The delegates were euphoric after his speech. The speech was certainly intended as a response to some Serb nationalist claims, marking western Serbian borders somewhere in the middle of Croatia. It should be noted, however, that it could also be interpreted as an expression of future Croatian expansionism, at the expense of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This also shows the ambiguity of Croatian politics. The HDZ acted, at the same time, as a friendly party towards the SDA, which above all wanted respect for Bosnian sovereignty, while some HDZ leaders presented views that were, at the least, very offensive about even the notion of Bosnian statehood. Despite these verbal incidents at the beginning of its work, the SDA publicly argued for democratic conditions in society, economic reforms and the protection of their own ethnic group. In the light of traditional Moslem politics of the past, Izetbegovic explained, 'We usually say that the party has two principles: democracy and market economy, and one direct political aim—a preservation of the stability of Bosnia-Herzegovina'.²⁵

The party organized its branches quickly throughout the republic. They even claimed to have 600,000 members and 2 million voters.²⁶ The claim, like many such claims made by the other parties, was totally unrealistic, but they were certainly a popular movement and the false claims were only a part of the pre-electoral campaign. It was impossible for the SDA to have 2 million voters because there were not 2 million Moslems in the republic who were eligible to vote. Despite the popular basis for the party, the SDA had a problem of a different kind. They had too many leaders willing to institutionalize their positions.

While Izetbegovic's position was undisputed and the party machine, helped by the religious network, built the impression of a charismatic leader, the place of the second in command was disputed. Adil Zulfikarpasic, a dissident who left the country in the 1940s and was renowned for his liberal ideas, joined Izetbegovic and the rather conservative political circles of the SDA. Increasingly militant mass meetings and the close relationship with the clergy led to the potential split of the party. After the largest nationalist meeting in Velika Kladusa, when at least 200,000 gathered to support the new member of the SDA—Fikret Abdic—the

dispute in the party's leadership became public. Abdic, the very same person whose business deals had caused an earthquake in the politics of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1987, joined the Moslem party and was followed by thousands of his fanatical supporters. The price was his candidacy for a place in the republic's Presidency. As there were only two places for Moslems in this body, and Izetbegovic was supposed to be another candidate, it meant Zulfikarpasic would be left out. This, at any rate, was the version of events claimed by SDA sources.²⁷

It is likely that these nominations played some role in the split within the SDA, but there were some other important events that certainly contributed heavily to Zulfikarpasic's decision to leave the party. The SDA's connections with Islam became increasingly important. Objections from certain leaders about the consumption of alcohol and other less important attributes of everyday life, shifted politics more towards the right of the political spectrum. The most popular chants and slogans in Velika Kladusa were: 'Nijaz [Durakovic] the traitor', 'We'll kill Vuk' [Draskovic, who was a leader of Serb nationalists in Serbia] and the name of 'Saddam Hussein'. Izetbegovic went so far as to say that 'the Moslems will defend Bosnia even armed if necessary'.²⁸ The party's flag, which had rather religious symbols on it and was opposed by Zulfikarpasic and his followers, was promoted at the meeting.²⁹ Increasing militancy at SDA meetings was further proved by the presence of the national flags of Turkey and Saudi Arabia.³⁰

Zulfikarpasic, therefore, announced his disagreement with this kind of policy and called for change. The party's ruling committee organized an emergency session in Tesanj to decide their future. The liberal wing was defeated and massive support for Izetbegovic was expressed.³¹ Religious officials showed their full support for Izetbegovic's politics by their attendance at all SDA gatherings. Izetbegovic's influence and leadership of the party would have been weaker if he had restricted the ties with clerics. It was clearly a 'marriage of interest', as the clerics were able to exercise their power and improve their own position in society—at least, this was a projected aim of SDA policy. However, it was not clear yet whether Moslem votes would be split after Zulfikarpasic formed a new party, the MBO, Moslem Bosniak Organization [Muslimanska bosnjacka organizacija]. The founding session of his party took place on the same day as the meeting of the SDA in Sarajevo.

The MBO was established as a liberal party open to everybody, although most members were Moslem. Their session was attended by a small number of people, similarly to the other sessions of pro-liberal political parties. At the same time, 40,000 people gathered at the SDA meeting in the main stadium in Sarajevo.³² Many of them were actually transported from smaller towns because no single nationalist meeting would have been able to attract a larger number of people in Sarajevo. The transport of followers was also organized by other ethnic parties when they had gatherings in Sarajevo. The meeting must have been a disappointment for the SDA leadership, who had expected 200,000 people. This

could be one of the reasons why the party's Vice-President, Muhamed Cengic, attacked Markovic at the meeting. He feared the reformists would take the votes of the Moslems.³³ Nonetheless, it was clear that the SDA would remain a populist party while the MBO would attract some intellectuals to their ranks. The ethnic vote, therefore, was not divided on a large scale at all.

The second largest nationalist party was the SDS, the Serbian Democratic Party [Srpska demokratska stranka], only founded on 12 July, in Sarajevo. The Serbs were the first to homogenize as a group with clear political aims but they failed to set up an official party and to organize themselves effectively. In June, after a communist enforced pause of 41 years, the Serbs established the Serb Cultural Society—Prosvjeta which did not have a political role but was a sign that there would be a third ethnic party very soon.³⁴ The first indication was certainly an article written by Radovan Karadzic in a Belgrade political weekly, *Nin*, in which he announced the formation of the Serb Democratic Party.³⁵ It is actually a paradox that the formal initiative for the formation of the SDS originally came from Serb circles in Croatia.

Their leader and founder, Jovan Raskovic, came to Bosnia-Herzegovina on a tour promoting the newly set up party bearing the same name as his organization in Croatia. Bosnian Serbs who prepared the setting up of the SDS were in need of some well-known Serb nationalist because they were not charismatic enough to attract the rural population in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the time. Thus, Raskovic was a major attraction to potential members in the beginning. Milosevic certainly could not come to the other republic and set up the party. He had to act indirectly. Raskovic was the one who introduced Karadzic to the grand master of Serb politics—Slobodan Milosevic.

The founding session of the SDS was attended by Alija Izetbegovic and Muhamed Filipovic. This was a surprise for some observers because at the SDA founding session whistles and boos had been directed against one of the SDS founders, Vladimir Srebrov.³⁶ The common understanding of ethnic leaders was that if any member of the ethnic group was attacked, the whole group was offended. However, the nationalists showed mutual respect from the very beginning of their activities, despite the numerous statements that could lead to an opposite understanding. Both doctrines were needed: one to show respect for the other ethnic group and the possibility of common governing in the future and the other to make the whole situation in society more nationalistic and therefore to attract more popular support from within their own ethnic group.

The real decision-making body of the SDS was the party's political council, which consisted of a few Serb academics and some party officials. One might say that the intellectual elite behind the SDS was in charge of the party while the real party leadership consisted of people who were not widely known. Karadzic and the rest of the leaders acted in the manner that the academics behind the scenes suggested. Belgrade provided them with the necessary support orchestrated by Milosevic's apparatus. It took some time before Karadzic and the others became recognizable to the population. It was only after the elections that

the official leadership of the SDS actually became more influential in the decision-making process.

Karadzic was a last-ditch choice as leader after some other respected Serbs, contacted by a group of nationalist academics in Sarajevo, had declined. The academics were mainly from the Faculty of Philosophy and the majority of them were not involved in high politics. Some of them enjoyed a good reputation in Sarajevo and their names could have attracted some urban Serb intellectuals. Their main task was setting up the party but they opted to lead party policy from behind the scenes. Therefore, they were looking for somebody with enough credibility to attract the masses and also with enough intellectual ability to discuss national politics with them. After several unsuccessful attempts to attract Nenad Kecmanovic into their ranks, by offering him the leadership, they decided to let Radovan Karadzic be the leader.³⁷

The programme of the SDS was similar to that of other ethnic parties. Indeed, it was difficult to distinguish the party programmes; only the names of the parties and their respective ethnic groups were different. The SDS wanted a strong central government for the Federation. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, they demanded further assurances for the Serbs, that is, the Chamber of Peoples in the Parliament which would take decisions by consensus only. In the very beginning there was support for Markovic's economic reforms, but this soon changed and they went along with Milosevic's criticism of the reforms. The character of the SDS as a populist movement was soon proven by a wide range of local branches. It also enjoyed a great response from Serbs joining the party. In Sokolac, they had 2,000 members before even a single meeting had taken place.³⁸ The district, which was rather rural, had a population of around 10,000 Serbs, including children.³⁹ This shows the scale of support for ethnic parties in rural Bosnia-Herzegovina. By the beginning of September, the SDS claimed a 350,000-strong membership in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁴⁰

In similarity to the SDA, the Serbs' popular movement was also challenged, but less seriously. When the SDS was founded it was announced that a wing called *Mlada Bosna*, led by Srebrov, would be the most radical and the newest. Some members, together with Srebrov, left the party later and joined another Serb nationalist party, the SPO, the Serb Movement of Renewal [*Srpski pokret obnove*]. This party never really entered political life in Bosnia-Herzegovina, except in a few rather small districts at a local level. An attempt at mutiny within the party was registered in Prijedor, but it was solved in a quiet manner. Thus, the SDS was not troubled by a struggle in the leadership, but only at a lower level of the party's ranks and at the very beginning of its activity.

While the multi-ethnic parties tried to build up charisma around their leaders, and the SDA did the same for their leadership, the SDS, and especially the HDZ, gave greater importance to their party than to their leaders. The logic of this could be found in the fact that the real ethnic leaders of the Serbs and the Croats were in Belgrade and Zagreb, respectively, and therefore there was less of a need for such people in Sarajevo. Indeed, it proved dangerous when some of the

Sarajevo HDZ leaders tried to become more independent in political and especially financial matters.

The HDZ was the ethnic movement that had the longest presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A network of branches had already been active for almost a year in some parts of Bosnia and, especially, Herzegovina. The remaining task was to set up the leadership and officially announce the organization's existence. Zagreb obviously wanted an obedient leadership in Sarajevo and thus full control of the events occurring among Bosnian Croats. Furthermore, the ethnic movement was supposed to be led by a pure member of the group. From the very beginning, the HDZ had a problematic leader, judged by all of Zagreb's, or rather Tudjman's, criteria.

Davor Perinovic was the first choice for leader, but he caused problems for the Zagreb leadership, who really governed the party in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Even the financing of the party was controlled by Zagreb, and this was not a secret. However, the main obstacle was the ethnic origin of Perinovic, whose father was a Serb. Nationalists from western Herzegovina could not accept a leader who did not have pure Croat blood. The Zagreb leadership was of the same attitude and they staged several attempts to change the leader during the summer of 1990. Even the official founding session of the HDZ, organized after more than a year of their activity in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was used as an attempt to replace Perinovic with a pure Croat.⁴¹

'The First General Assembly of the Croat Democratic Union of Bosnia-Herzegovina', as it was officially called, was staged in Sarajevo's large indoor arena on 18 August 1990, but the supporters who gathered there were not from Sarajevo. Most of them were transported from other, mainly rural, parts of the republic to ensure a large crowd. This was further proof of the division between urban and rural communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Football fans from Sarajevo even went to the city centre waving Yugoslav flags, to oppose the HDZ members waving Croat flags. One should note that the football fans were of all ethnic origins and all from Sarajevo. Perinovic survived the founding session, but not for long.

In September, Tudjman sacked him himself at the meeting in Zagreb. This fact provoked not only Perinovic but also non-nationalist parties to protest, on the grounds that it was interference from another republic. The communist leader, Durakovic, made the loudest objection, but without effect.⁴² A replacement was found in Stjepan Kljuic, a local journalist from Sarajevo, who led the party as acting president. The Catholic Church kept quiet about the sacking, despite the fact that they were very much involved in the party, if not as officials then as supporters and aides. In Duvno, local Croats openly celebrated Tudjman's inauguration as the Croatian leader in the neighbouring republic. The Catholic priests there staged special masses on that occasion, which once again illustrated the relationship between the two.⁴³ The Church was used by the party for organizational activities, as the former leader explained: 'Before the "First

General Assembly of HDZ of Bosnia-Herzegovina", the meeting was propagated largely in all Sarajevo's Catholic churches, in private and official contacts.⁴⁴

The political clashes within the Moslem party, and to a lesser extent within its Serb counterpart, were about politics and personal promotion. The struggle within the Croat party was racist. It did not prevent the other two parties from cooperating with the new leadership, as they had done before. The leader's ethnicity was not the only 'purist' problem for the HDZ. Originally, the Croat Democratic Union, when it was still illegal, had adopted some Moslems into their ranks. After the SDA was established, most of them either left the Croat nationalists or went into the margins of political life. The Herzegovinian faction of the HDZ wanted an ethnically pure organization. Hence, the nationalists' interests were mutually reinforcing. Actually, they were preparing themselves not for the elections but for an ethnic census, from which they would be able to measure the strength and demands of the ethnic groups according to their numbers. They were at least honest in this task, since they did not want to include members from other ethnic groups. Pure racist theory was their main ideology.

Celebrating Tudjman's success in Croatia with the Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina was not a relationship that went in just one direction. Many Croatian leaders campaigned in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the HDZ. The Presidency in Sarajevo, still made up of communists, protested but without any effect.⁴⁵ The HDZ leaders in Zagreb openly showed their concern for Croats outside Croatia and even made some territorial claims. Izetbegovic, however, did not see the HDZ's policy as such: 'The HDZ is a democratic party with a strong ethnic character (for some tastes it is too strong), that offers its "good services" to Bosnia. We will, most probably, politely decline to accept the offer.'⁴⁶

This kind of diplomacy was characteristic of the leaders of all ethnic parties. They were destined to cooperate in the pre-electoral period, as it was the only way to defeat multi-ethnic parties. The strategy of raising interethnic tensions in some communities, occasional insulting speeches and consequent diplomatic respect for the other ethnic parties, was successful. The HDZ soon claimed 200,000 members in the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁴⁷ Thus, all three nationalist parties were accepted *en masse* by their ethnic groups.

The nationalists needed each other and were ever more determined to show the need for their election as protectors of their own nations and also as mutual cooperators in the republic's leadership. The voters wanted protection for their own nation and therefore looked for the most extreme and the strongest 'protectors'. The problem was that the ethnic parties were, or they became, absolute extremists during the campaigns in order to get rid of opponents within their own ethnic politics. This fact prevented them from being acceptable to the voters and supporters of other nationalist parties.

The parties were organized in similar patterns. The main councils were supposed to govern and direct the policy but basically they formally approved only the directions issued by the small leadership. Therefore, even the parties like the

SDS, with no strong leader in the beginning, gradually built up his image and the decision-making process was converted from democratic to authoritarian. The Serb and the Croat parties both had powerful patrons and real leaders outside the republic. This fact gave less credibility to the official leaders if they chose to act independently. The HDZ had changed three leaders in less than two years prior to the war, while the real power and influence lay in Zagreb with Tudjman. Milosevic was rarely so open in exercising his influence over the Bosnian Serb party, but the pattern was the same. The SDA was, in this sense, different because they had to rely on themselves alone. Therefore, their president became more powerful personally than the other two ethnic leaders. In general, all the parties had a democratic form, but practised very little democracy in party life.

Religious leaders played an important role during the whole campaign. In the end, they found it necessary to underline their political preferences. The Islamic Religious Community first declared themselves officially independent from the political struggles, but their imams attended all the mass meetings of the SDA. They issued instructions to believers just before the elections. They did not actually name the party to vote for, but described the SDA.⁴⁸ The Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church sent a similar message to their followers.⁴⁹ The Orthodox priests were always present at the SDS meetings and did similar propaganda work for the Serb party.

The best example was at one SDA meeting, when Izetbegovic complained that they had been accused of being a religious party. He asked supporters whether they were such a party, but received an answer he did not desire. 'Yes, we are', was the response from the crowd, to whom Izetbegovic's denial had come as a surprise.⁵⁰ Hence, the importance of the religious communities in the pre-electoral period. One observer described the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina as follows:

Dr Perinovic puts a sign of equality between Croatian and Catholic people. Alija Izetbegovic says that his party is neither religious nor atheist but continues that Islam is so important for the Moslems that no atheist thinking could have success. Therefore, he claims, the phrase 'Moslem-Atheist' is *contradictio in adjecto*. At the founding session of the Serb Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina, it was said that 'Serb people came from the shrines of the Serbs' Orthodox church' which should therefore be put back into the lives of Serbs as it deserves.⁵¹

The high membership of all the parties also shows a misunderstanding of political competition and democracy. Ordinary people felt they should become members of a certain party and not only vote for it. This may have led to an even higher passion. The parties were not understood as organizations to be supported or voted for, but as 'us' against 'them'. Therefore, any attack on the party was understood as a personal attack on every member. The nationalists claimed to represent their ethnic groups and so an attack on the ethnic group was understood

in this way. Altogether, it simply enabled the further rise of nationalism among the population in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Nonetheless, the ethnic parties started a strange collaboration at the beginning of their political work. In the multi-ethnic community, ethnic parties could only survive if their counterparts were equally strong. Therefore, their collaboration was sincere. Without this condition they would not survive. They were not rivals because none of them counted on a single possible vote from the other ethnic group. The policy of all the nationalists clearly shows their awareness of this issue. Their only enemies were multiethnic parties. As the enemy was common, it was obvious from the beginning that they would have to form a kind of coalition if they were to mobilize most of the votes among their own ethnic group.

All ethnic parties could be described as right of centre on the political spectrum, although they all claimed to be closer to the centre. It was certainly the safest option for attracting the highest number of supporters from the whole political spectrum. They all claimed to support the struggle for democracy, a market economy and, most of all, the rights of their own ethnic groups. It was their own ethnic group, they all claimed, that had suffered most under the communists. These organizations were not really parties but ethnic movements, as time was to prove. Their supporters must have been offended by some of the statements made by other nationalist parties but, nevertheless, they all invited the other parties to their more important meetings.

THE DYNAMIC OF NATIONALISM

At a federal level, there was no agreement on constitutional change and the state actually entered into the final stage of its constitutional crisis.⁵² The political crisis of the Federation threatened to undermine the economic reforms of the Federal Government. In the summer, the economic situation was still under the Federal Government's control, but the pressure on the economic policy had increased. The government managed to accumulate even more hard currency in the federal reserves, amounting to US\$9.5 billion, but the other economic policies, however, were not so positive.⁵³

The government's strict programme of reforms resulted in many problems for the population. Neither jobs nor salaries were safe any longer. The market economy meant competition, but the population was used to a planned economy after 50 years of communism and blamed the state for economic problems. Inflation started to rise again after April 1990, but it was still in single figures and under control. There was pressure from some producers who found themselves in trouble without the state to cover their losses and who were, at the same time, forbidden to put prices up.

The petrol industry wanted higher prices, especially with the new crisis in the Gulf. The railway system made similar demands, claiming they were faced with collapse. Ticket prices went up by 35 per cent at the end of the summer.⁵⁴ The

Federal Council of Workers' Unions threatened general strike action because of the state of the economy.⁵⁵ The peasants were also loud in their demands for greater aid from the government and higher prices for agricultural products. The economic damage caused by the blockade of Iraq was estimated at US\$4 billion.⁵⁶ Speculation about a devaluation of the dinar also caused a shortage of foreign currency.⁵⁷

All of this came at the worst possible moment for Markovic and the nonnationalists in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the months approaching the election date. People's trust in the Federal Government was therefore shaken. Security issues in the rest of the Federation were also raised. In Slovenia, the new government sacked the commanders of the Territorial Defence, which was another decision that contravened the Federal Constitution. JNA (Yugoslav People's Army) units occupied its building, but the real command was already in the republic's Ministry of Defence.⁵⁸ The Slovenes moved further towards independence in November by announcing that a referendum would be held very soon.

In Croatia, the Serbs started an open rebellion against Tudjman's government. Armed incidents were no longer unusual. The JNA was accused of siding with the Serbs, who appeared on several occasions with weapons, which were legally possessed only by JNA units. Railway lines were cut and many bombs exploded, causing the further disarray of the railway system not only in Croatia but also in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serbia declared its own economic rules, which were against Federal Government policy. They put special taxes on companies and products from Slovenia and Croatia.⁵⁹

The leaders in Croatia and Serbia exercised more direct influence over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Dalibor Brozovic, the deputy Croatian leader, analysed the political situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and concluded that it meant that 'Moslem parties and the HDZ would have an absolute majority regardless of whether they formed a coalition or not'.⁶⁰ Tudjman sent a pre-electoral message to 'Croats of Catholic and Moslem faith' in 'HercegBosna', as the Croat nationalists started increasingly to name BosniaHerzegovina.⁶¹ He claimed to respect the borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but opposed an 'artificial separation of Croat people by these or any other borders'.⁶² Thus, Croatian leaders made it clear what kind of Bosnia-Herzegovina they would be willing to recognize as a partner, or rather as a satellite, in the future.

The nationalists from Serbia also negotiated about the borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their idea was to exchange territories in Croatia, which would become known as the 'Krajina region', for western Herzegovina. Bosnia-Herzegovina would then be constituted in the same way as Switzerland.⁶³ All the nationalist leaders spent a lot of time describing the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina as Switzerland, without any proper explanation. Old historical maps were discussed in the Serbian press and the geo-political situation prior to the formation of Yugoslavia was recalled. A phrase launched in Belgrade nationalist intellectual circles became increasingly present in political life and was used as

an argument by Serb nationalists. Dobrica Cosic, the unofficial 'father of Serbian nationalism', put forward the claim, 'the Serbs are winning in war and losing in peace'.⁶⁴ This became the common understanding of history and the situation for rural Serbs, who finally felt connected to their intellectual elite.

These kinds of phrases were attractive and understandable to less educated people. Thus, they had certainly made up their minds by this time and were only waiting for the possibility of casting their votes. Heartfelt warnings from the multi-ethnic parties went unheeded because of the complexity of the situation. Equally, the simple communist popular phrases of 'brotherhood and unity' had been proven false by the very same party in recent years and, therefore, were worthless in terms of attracting the rural population, especially those who lived under heavy economic pressure. Calls from other nationalist parties could not be addressed towards Serbs, because of the very nature of nationalist parties that meant they could only address their own ethnic fellows. This kind of widespread mythology proved to be more important in the campaign than any effort in the sphere of political marketing.

Ethnic divisions in Yugoslavia shifted from political circles into the lives of ordinary people. By the summer of 1990, inter-ethnic clashes had become a part of everyday life. Nationalist politics were established in both Serbia and Croatia and were reflected by the increasing number of nationalist incidents between ordinary Serbs and Croats. Nationalist addresses to the public by ruling politicians, common in Serbia over the previous years, also became a part of Croatia's ruling vocabulary. Sime Djodan, a top HDZ official in Zagreb, said that the Croatian border would not be on the River Una (the western Bosnian border) for ever, 'Five years will not pass and our [Croatian] flag will be flying on the top of Mount Romanija... Bosnia is Croatian from ancient times.'⁶⁵

This mountain was mainly populated by Serbs who had suffered heavy casualties at the hands of *Ustashas* in the Second World War. Hence the statement was even more insulting. With this kind of rhetoric from the rulers in Croatia, ordinary Croats just followed suit. The Adriatic coast, mainly in Croatia, was important for the economy as it attracted huge numbers of tourists, both from Yugoslavia and abroad. Therefore, the Federal Government decided to allow most tourists into the country without passports or visas.⁶⁶ This did not attract more tourists in 1990, however, because of the political situation. Compared to the previous year, there were over 3 per cent fewer foreign tourists and more than 11 per cent fewer domestic visitors, to the seaside resorts in Croatia at the beginning of the season.⁶⁷ The newspapers published reports with headlines that described the whole situation. 'Foreigners and Bosnians' was the response to the question of who was not afraid to visit the Croatian part of the Adriatic.⁶⁸ Another was even more direct, 'There are no Serb brothers', which made it clear for whom it was not the safest possible holiday destination.⁶⁹

In some resorts the fall in the number of visitors was as high as 40 per cent, while the Montenegrin part of the coast enjoyed a revival in the number of holidaymakers from Serbia.⁷⁰ Excursions of students from Serbia going on

holiday in Croatia were often attacked along the coast. Many cars were stoned just because their registration plates were from Serbia. These incidents motivated the Sarajevo Town Council to propose new plates without signs of the town of origin, but it was all too late by June 1990 and it remained only a proposal.⁷¹

On the day of Tudjman's official establishment as Croatian leader, the houses of some well-known artists, who happened to be Serbs, were set alight in the Sibenik area of the coast.⁷² Some similar attacks and open inter-ethnic conflicts were also reported in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the summer. The re-emergence of economic problems had immediate repercussions. The relative lack of workers' dissent came to an end and strike actions targeted the republic's level of power. This was especially the case after the republic's governing institutions unwisely increased their personal salaries. Some of the new parties strongly condemned this policy.⁷³ Workers in some of the factories in Capljina, Travnik and Prijedor started strikes in August.⁷⁴ By then, ethnic parties had become influential and began to transform dissent into their own support. Thus, the workers became divided on an ethnic basis during some of the strike actions, such as that in Bijeljina.⁷⁵ The miners, first from Tuzla and later from Zenica and other parts of central Bosnia, took to the streets to demand higher salaries. After being unsuccessful, they moved to Sarajevo and blocked the town centre for one night at the end of August. The Minister of Internal Affairs threatened to resign because nobody dared to remove the blockade.⁷⁶

The governing bodies were afraid of popular revolt and the system was gradually collapsing. The situation was bizarre because no party claimed control of the government in Sarajevo. Even the communists were critical and demanded explanations. Thus, the government was responsible to nobody and supported by no one. Their main economic duties were assigned to the Federal Government while other responsibilities, such as development, internal affairs, welfare, health and social policy were potentially very unpopular among the people and could endanger the ministers' future political careers. Some of them were already negotiating terms with nationalists.⁷⁷

There were also political divisions that were not along ethnic lines. There was a very tense situation in the Bihac region between communist and SDA supporters. The communist leader was even prevented from giving a speech in Velika Kladusa by local SDA members.⁷⁸ This incident, though not smelling of nationalism, does indicate the serious lack of tolerance and the passion with which political opponents were greeted in the rural communities. But most incidents were nationalistic. A bus marked with HDZ flyers and Croat banners was stoned in Jablanica. The seriousness of these incidents gave rise to divisions in the rest of the republic. In earlier years, local and Sarajevo officials had been able to solve the problems, but this was no longer the case. The longer the problems existed, however small they were in the beginning, the bigger they grew and the more they caused further divisions amongst ethnic groups.

Nor were other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina immune to small-scale conflicts. In Posusje, western Herzegovina, one man was beaten and the police had to

prevent the mob from lynching him just because he had whistled in protest at a meeting of the HDZ.⁷⁹ The situation in the small community of Nevesinje had been tense ever since the beginning of the rise of Serb nationalism in 1987. In Livno, one bus was stoned because it was from Belgrade.⁸⁰ Some villages wanted to join neighbouring districts where the majority of the population was of their own ethnic background. Similar demands were made in some companies. This kind of activity went on in Milici, in eastern Bosnia, and in Sipovo, Mrkonjic Grad and Jajce in central Bosnia.

Other communities voted to change their district's name—such as Duvno, where the population favoured the name 'Tomislavgrad'. Roadblocks were put up in Drvar, in western Bosnia, because the workers opposed the initiative of the republic government to change the Law on Woods.⁸¹ Karadzic offered them protection by the future government while he claimed the law was against the Serbs, who represented the majority of the population living in wooded areas.⁸² Drvar was a community with almost exclusively Serb population.⁸³

Another incident happened in the mainly Croat-populated, neighbouring communities of Capljina and Ljubuski. A long convoy of vehicles, all marked with HDZ signs, marked the anniversary of the founding of the HDZ.⁸⁴ It was the anniversary of the Zagreb meeting on 17 June 1989, when Tudjman and his followers had gone public. This showed that Croats from western Herzegovina regarded Zagreb as more important than Sarajevo. The HDZ in Bosnia-Herzegovina was founded in January 1990, but nobody ever noticed this, except their first leader, Perinovic.⁸⁵ Thus, the HDZ headquarters in Sarajevo were without influence in western Herzegovina, where their main forces were to be found. In fact, the activities of the HDZ in Herzegovina were totally directed by Zagreb. Rural areas were already controlled by the Croat nationalists in western Herzegovina. The only proper municipalities in the region, Capljina and Mostar on the edge of it, were in general still opposed to nationalists. This is why most of the cars in the column that celebrated the HDZ's anniversary on the streets of Capljina were actually from neighbouring Ljubuski, which really was a rural village.

This was regarded as an insult by the locals of Capljina and they soon returned the visit. After the football match between Yugoslavia and Argentina at the World Cup, a column of cars from Capljina was directed towards Ljubuski. Yugoslavia had lost, but the game was an excuse to show togetherness in some multi-ethnic communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The young men from Capljina were attacked on their way to Ljubuski by a mob of 500 people who burnt the Yugoslav flag and stoned many cars. One man, a Moslem from Capljina, was injured by the Croat nationalists.⁸⁶ At the time, most of the population in Bosnia-Herzegovina were still favourable towards the federal state. The Croats from western Herzegovina were a rare exception.

As in this case, some other larger and more urban communities were less affected by nationalism, but growing tensions were felt and spontaneous acts were initiated by football games. This was proven in the case of Sarajevo, where

togetherness was still at a high point in the summer of 1990. After the Yugoslav team beat Spain in June 1990, the streets of Sarajevo witnessed mass demonstrations. All traffic was stopped for the entire night. People gathered with Yugoslav flags on the streets to show their resistance towards ethnic divisions.⁸⁷ This was not to show support for the state, as it was then organized, rather, the Yugoslav flag implied the unity of all Bosnian people. Nobody organized the gathering and such a sports celebration had rarely happened before. It was against all the odds.

This event, in practice, was exactly what, in theory civil society should be. It was the entirely spontaneous act, not of a civil group but of the citizens all together. Sport provided an excuse for a demonstration and to influence political decisions. As the demonstration was repeated just few days later, after the national team lost the game, it became more obvious that the people cared less about the football result than about their future.⁸⁸ It also proves the uniqueness of the political and ethnic attitude in Bosnia-Herzegovina, at least in its urban areas.

Such events were significant in showing that the streets could be used for civil activities. This was one of the first actions against nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was actually the beginning of a phase of civil society in which the target would be nationalism. Therefore, one should examine the incidents in western Herzegovina in this light. But violent acts had already entered even the urban and non-nationalistic communities, as an incident involving the mayor of Zagreb proved. A car, and the mayor who was in it, was attacked during the football fans' festivities in Sarajevo.⁸⁹ This showed that the urban communities were no longer immune to the use of force and tolerance was fading away from the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

An example of the popular attitude of rural Bosnia-Herzegovina was to be found in Foca where the two ethnic communities split as early as June 1990. The Serbs employed at 'Focatrans' began strike action at the beginning of June. Their main demand was the resignation of the company's general manager, who was a Moslem and was supported by all the Moslem workers apart from three, who joined the Serbs.⁹⁰ The local council's decision actually gave support to the Serbs and the final result was a community almost completely divided along ethnic lines. This conflict lasted for the whole of the pre-election campaign and was exploited by the nationalists to a great extent. The manager whose resignation the Serbs had demanded became a symbol of Moslem pride. Clashes between the workers were no longer isolated incidents and other citizens organized guards in their suburbs during the night. The police prevented wider clashes on many occasions, while the real armed fight took place in some of the surrounding villages.⁹¹ A state of emergency was ordered in the community on 10 September and was in force until 11 October.⁹²

The nationalist parties were not much help during this crisis. The population of Foca's urban area consisted of 14,343 citizens, 55.5 per cent of whom were Serbs and 38.7 per cent of whom were Moslems.⁹³ The Croats represented less than 1 per cent of the population and, therefore, the Moslem and Serb parties

were the most influential in the community. The ethnic proportion of the whole district was different and the Moslems had a majority of 6 per cent over the Serbs, who counted for 45 per cent of the total population. The rest had mainly declared as Yugoslavs.⁹⁴ Although both the SDA and the SDS sent out a joint appeal to the community, calling for reason and peace, in practice they acted differently.⁹⁵

In Foca the SDA staged a large meeting on 25 August, which was the anniversary of the massacre during the Second World War, when the Chetniks (Serb nationalists) executed several thousand Moslems. Over 100,000 people attended the meeting to see all the main Moslem leaders. There were visitors from the other ethnic parties, as was the custom.⁹⁶ The HDZ representative, Anto Bakovic, was a priest, demonstrating clerical involvement in political affairs on the side of the nationalists. The SDA invited the Serb representatives to commemorate the victims together, but the latter declined to appear at that stage of the ceremony.

Several thousand Moslems from Sandzak, in neighbouring Serbia and Montenegro, attended the meeting. This showed that the character of the SDA was similar to that of the SDS and the HDZ. They did not respect republican borders and were in the process of marking their ethnic territory. Later, Karadzic offered his solution to the problem in 'Focatrans'. He promised that the SDS would establish a separate company for the strikers, almost all of whom were Serbs.⁹⁷ One could not say that the meetings and the nationalists' policies were the cause of the community's later state of emergency but certainly they were damaging. The communist rule was responsible for the situation, but without the nationalists underlining all the differences among the people, the situation would hardly have gone so far.

Second World War atrocities were recalled and revived by all three ethnic parties. The Serbs often added fire to their speeches by reminding people about the victims of massacres and the genocidal *Ustasha*'s policy in the early 1940s. The Croats reminded their supporters of the victims of the partisan revenge operations in 1945, against members of the *Ustasha* regime and, in some cases, civilians. Therefore, everybody claimed the title of the greatest sufferer and the most endangered species. Ethnic leaders were there to offer protection, but only if they got all the votes from their ethnic groups. The other parties offered protection for everybody, but this was much too vague for the voters. They wanted a more precise description and just the name of the ethnic group was enough for this purpose.

If the electorate did not want ethnic segregation, they were easily persuaded that it would not happen by the nationalist parties, which regularly invited representatives from the other two nationalist parties to their gatherings. Thus, the nationalists organized massive meetings and showed the strength that their followers wanted to see, and also secured the impression of future cooperation by showing respect to the leaders of the other nationalist parties.

After some rural and smaller urban communities were, effectively, divided, the next issue raised was how to mark territorially ethnic space. Again, some of the events outside the republic had inevitable repercussions in Bosnia-Herzegovina because of the already high level of nationalist feelings. An open rebellion in the Serb-populated area of Croatia geographically bordered on similar areas in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, there was a potential serious geo-political issue to be raised involving Bosnian territory. This subject was brought to the fore by a declaration at the 'All Serb Assembly' in Banja Luka, when the setting up of the Serb National Council was announced.⁹⁸ It was followed by the establishment of two other councils formed in Tuzla and Trebinje.

The local Serb leader in Trebinje, Bozidar Vucurevic, went even further and speculated about a change in the inter-republic borders if Yugoslavia dissolved, and the possibility of joining the Trebinje region with Montenegro and Serbia.⁹⁹ In 1990, however, this was still only a threat of leaders like Karadzic rather than the state of affairs in the republic. Karadzic advocated the council as a defensive action aimed at the protection of his own people. His proposal was a response to plans for a future parliament with two chambers, but without a chamber of nations (ethnic groups), where decisions would be made by consensus only. Actually, he was supported by both the SDA and the HDZ in his demands for this chamber, but not in his demands for the establishment of an autonomous Serb council outside the state's institutions.¹⁰⁰

Karadzic explained the action further as a prevention of any effort to set up independent states of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹⁰¹ Thus, it was primarily to pressure the SDA and the HDZ into restraining themselves from any movement towards independence or the greater autonomy of Bosnia-Herzegovina, if they were able to attract enough votes at the forthcoming elections. However, it also took a decision-making process away from Sarajevo because, if Yugoslavia was to be dissolved, the SDS demanded that no action should be taken on Bosnia-Herzegovina's behalf. Otherwise, certain parts of its territory would secede.

The importance of this decision was that it represented the first public announcement, made by a significant political force within Bosnia-Herzegovina, of possible geo-political changes and disintegration. Karadzic saw a danger in the probable coalition of the Croat and Moslem parties and tried to prevent it. The example of posters printed for the HDZ gave Karadzic good reason for such fears. They put a Catholic cross and a Moslem crescent on their posters, to symbolize unity between the two ethnic groups, without any regard for the Serbs.

Non-nationalist politicians attacked the nationalists heavily for dividing the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The latter cleverly decided that once the ethnic groups were really divided, they should show some mutual respect and togetherness, otherwise, the fear of total division could prevent votes being cast in favour of the nationalists. The reason for this was, in fact, that even the nationalists understood that ancient ethnic hatred did not prevail in the country

and that most of the divisions were the result of recent economics and politics. Therefore, they felt it was necessary to send a message to their potential voters that it was not an indefinite division, but only a measure of ethnic groups—an ethnic census. In other words, they would lead them into a future with more rights, but ordinary life would remain more or less the same. This was the message most voters wanted to hear.

In Konjic, on 4 November, the nationalist parties organized their first joint meeting. This was a clear message that they could collaborate and that they did not hate each other. The place was decorated with the nationalist insignia of all three parties. They simply showed that it would be no problem for them to govern together. Eight days later the nationalist leaders took a further step by organizing a joint press conference in Sarajevo. They did not announce a coalition for the forthcoming elections, but they did not deny one. They talked about possible partnership in governing Bosnia-Herzegovina. The shortest description of the role of this new policy was made by Muhamed Cengic of the SDA, 'There is no-one who can claim now that the people would be on a collision course with each other due to the policy of ethnic parties.'¹⁰² Leaders of the nationalist parties acted individually along the lines of this strategy. Izetbegovic stated that a civil republic was an optimal condition for Bosnia-Herzegovina: 'Let Serbia and Croatia move towards the creation of such [nation] states; we don't have the conditions for it in Bosnia. The only option we have is to create a civil republic or have a civil war.'¹⁰³ Karadzic dismissed the possibility of civil war as a 'mad and impossible idea... We can live together; living together has created some eternal values and the possibilities of continuing to live together.'¹⁰⁴

Stjepan Kljuic, a new leader of the HDZ, was equally supportive of a peaceful and prosperous common state, the division of which would be madness:

Our position is that Bosnia-Herzegovina is indivisible and that the Croats want equal rights, not more and not less, as granted to other people... As far as I know, Mr. Karadzic and Mr. Izetbegovic, and I, on behalf of my party, can assure you that we are all aware that we have to live together.¹⁰⁵

Thus, after several months of bitter campaigning to underline all the possible differences of ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the leaders of the nationalist parties made a 'U-turn' and promised togetherness. This proved to be the last touch needed. The voters that had not yet made up their minds certainly faced a dilemma concerning whether to support the nationalists because of the danger of ethnic division. They were equally concerned about protecting their own ethnic rights. All this was solved by nationalist promises of living together, almost as before, and also strengthening the protection of the rights of ethnic groups. This was the end of a very wise campaign.

Meanwhile, the non-nationalists tried to impress voters with their campaigns and attempted to act like Western political parties. This was especially the case for the Reformist Party which attracted many public figures, actors, singers,

journalists, sportsmen and artists. They claimed they would lead the country out of crisis but that it would be painful—as most people had already discovered. The communists made similar claims but they were connected, at least in the voters' minds, with the causes of the crisis. Thus, only the nationalists promised a better future without pain for their people.

More important for an understanding of the mind-set of the Bosnian voters is the matter of the choice itself. There were anti-nationalists who were made up of reformists and communists. The reformists were in trouble because of the recent frequent economic problems caused, to a great extent, by political will in the republican centres. The communists were a synonym for the past, despite their reformed policy and character. The nationalists therefore attracted people who were fed up with communism, as well as those who really wanted to cast a nationalist vote.

The communists were determined they would win the elections and they spent most of the campaign criticizing the reformists, who were seen as rivals, while the nationalists were enemies. They misjudged the proportion of the vote and thought the majority would be in favour of multi-ethnic parties. However, on 25 October the leaders of the two parties, Durakovic and Kecmanovic, made a secret deal. Durakovic sent a letter of regard to the reformists' meeting in Mostar, while Kecmanovic did the same for the communists' gathering in Sarajevo.¹⁰⁶ When Durakovic's letter was read in Mostar, the anti-communist wing of the reformists rebelled, though at the closed session, and the deal was never repeated.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the pact was called off and the attacks continued to make the nationalists even stronger.

The irony was that there were very few major differences between the two parties. Many members of the reformists, including most of the leadership, had previously been members of the League of Communists. Therefore, one should not look at probable ideological differences, especially bearing in mind Markovic's ambiguity on this issue. One party, the communists, already reformed and entitled 'The League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina-Socialist Democratic Party', supported economic reforms while the other, the Reformist Party, was a product of their success. All that was left were personal grievances, as proved by later events. In 1999, they merged into the Social Democratic Party—albeit that the circumstances had been significantly changed, as had most of the party leaders—under the leadership of Zlatko Lagumdžija, in whose flat a pre-electoral deal was brokered in 1990. Regardless of their similarities, both parties entered the final stage of the electoral campaign as rivals aiming at the same target group.

PROPAGANDA AND PUBLIC REACTIONS

Despite showing massive popular support outside the major urban centres for the nationalists, surveys conducted by the newly established agencies put multi-ethnic parties at the top of the popularity polls. One of the most often quoted

agencies, 'Sigma', put the communists in the lead with 21.17 per cent of the votes, followed by the reformists with 15.33 per cent, and finally the nationalists: the SDA with 7.17 per cent, the HDZ with 4.5 per cent and the SDS with 3.17 per cent.¹⁰⁸ Another survey conducted by the newspaper *Vjesnik*, showed similar results: the communists led with 19.8 per cent, followed by the SDA with 18.8 per cent, the reformists with 16.3 per cent and the HDZ and the SDS both with 4.0 per cent.¹⁰⁹ Over 33 per cent of those questioned in both surveys either refused to answer or were not sure how they would vote. The only significant difference was the number of votes for the SDA. *Vecernje Novine*, a Sarajevo daily, gave even more chance to the communists and their leader, forecasting that around 50 per cent of the votes would be cast in their favour.¹¹⁰

However, when comparing their predictions to the later electoral results, one should note that all the surveys of public opinion in Bosnia-Herzegovina were unreliable for the following reasons. People were not used to this kind of polling. There was a constant fear of the state, regardless of how weak it was, and people were not honest because to cast a vote for nationalists was a kind of shame in multi-ethnic communities, which most of the towns were. Most of the villages were not multi-ethnic, as such, but those who lived there were rarely consulted in such polls. Lack of telephone lines was not an uncommon characteristic of these areas, which were consequently excluded from the polls. Thus, they were not properly conducted.

An author who analysed the elections rightly found many irregularities in these surveys. The ethnic and educational structure of those polled did not correspond with the actual ethnic structure and educational background of the population. The proportion of less educated people in Bosnia-Herzegovina was higher than the proportion of those who were surveyed.¹¹¹ However, despite all the irregularities in these polls, one could discover some trends. If one puts all the surveys in chronological order, regardless of the fact that they were not conducted by the same sources, by the same agency or by the same method, there is one recognizable trend: the proportion of the nationalists' vote rose towards the date of the elections. The exception was a short period immediately after the split within the SDA, but they recovered in the next poll.¹¹²

During this period politicians were very concerned about the role played by the media. The nationalists kept accusing state-run Radio-Television Sarajevo of being under the influence of and working for other ethnic groups throughout the campaign. Adil Zulfikarpasic went the furthest by calling the television a 'Pro-Chetnik Mafia', although he played down his remarks later.¹¹³ One could not help but notice a number of comments against nationalism in the newspapers and on Radio-Television Sarajevo. Therefore, it was logical that the politicians involved with the nationalist parties felt offended. But it is also very hard to find that the media sided with any particular ethnic group. The editors applied the rules very strictly and tried very hard to ensure the equal representation of all the parties. The five major parties also enjoyed very balanced timing in the news programmes of Television Sarajevo.

TABLE 3

POLITICAL PARTIES: POPULARITY POLL (%), 1990

<i>Party</i>	<i>Date Agency</i>	<i>22 June Sigma</i>	<i>31 August Sigma</i>	<i>15 October Sigma</i>	<i>19 October Vjesnik</i>	<i>4 November Nedjelja</i>
Communist		37.0	21.2	28.5	22.0	20.0
Reformist		0.5	15.3	14.0	21.2	16.5
SDA		1.5	9.3	7.3	8.3	10.2
SDS		—	4.5	5.3	5.5	10.2
HDZ		2.8	7.2	8.0	8.8	9.2

Note: The rest of the votes were cast for minor parties.

Source: S.Arnaudovic (1996).

The party most often in the news, the communists, had only two minutes more than the reformists, who were in fourth place.¹¹⁴ It was only the HDZ, in fifth place, with eight minutes less than the communists, who had reason to complain. However, they missed some deadlines due to their internal struggles and did not go public for a while.¹¹⁵ One could easily conclude that the media based in Bosnia-Herzegovina had actually been independent since the fall of the previous communist rulers in the late 1980s. They tried to cover the pre-electoral campaign professionally, but one should also notice that it was only in June 1990 that the main daily, *Oslobodjenje*, declared itself an independent newspaper. Altogether, the role of the media was professional, but it lacked experience.

The nationalists had their own network for sending messages out to the people through the priests of both Churches and the imams, which proved to be more influential. Furthermore, ethnic parties spent far more time agitating in the villages and smaller towns, while the others concentrated their propaganda in the media and in the larger centres. The reformists, for example, staged nine conventions in nine major centres, while the rest of the country was left with an occasional visit by the party's minor leaders.¹¹⁶ This was not enough for traditionally suspicious villagers in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The parties paid much attention and put plenty of effort in to other means of political propaganda. Posters were the main weapon and all the towns and even smaller villages were covered with them. All the major parties put pictures of their leaders on posters as they were all widely known. Their messages were absolutely clear. The communists, in addition, staged a campaign with the message 'We shall live together' in response to nationalist calls from Serbia and Croatia and also to some of the SDA vocabulary. The reformists' slogan was 'This is a time of changes—join us', which was actually the slogan of the Federal Government. They borrowed most of their propaganda from Markovic—including a poster with his picture, which was most prominent in the major streets. The SDA supplemented the name of the party with the description 'Moslem party', to underline its character. The HDZ poster has already been

described. Their propaganda machinery was almost completely organized in Zagreb, including the posters.

Two of the minor parties, and the only ones that would actually join the major parties in Parliament, exercised completely different strategies with almost identical results. The SSO-DS, the former Youth Organization, put out their motto, 'liberty, democracy, harmony' but did not really join in with the 'poster war'. The MBO featured their leader, Zulfikarpasic, and under his picture was the message 'Into Europe with me'. This was a later version of the original, 'In Europe with him'. It proves that the parties changed their strategy according to their circumstances. Whether it was successful remains a matter of debate. As the HDZ and the SDS were not among the most prominent parties in terms of posters, one could say that this kind of propaganda was not decisive. The SDA, on the other hand, invested in this sort of activity and it paid off, whereas the efforts of the communists and the reformists did not.

The last stage of the campaign came on the last day provided for such purposes, as any kind of campaigning was banned for the last 24 hours before the election. For a long time there was doubt over whether to give a right to vote to those citizens who had not lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina for longer than six months. It was an important question because it would allow registration at the last minute of many organized supporters who really lived in other republics. It was already known that the HDZ in Croatia had actually received many votes from those who lived in Herzegovina. The ethnic parties would be favoured by a decision allowing the possibility of last-minute registration for voters, because they were organized movements. Every movement was followed with high passion and, therefore, supporters would commit themselves to travel and vote for an ethnic cause. One could hardly expect the supporters of any other party to do the same. The Constitutional Court changed the decision at the last moment and this kind of registration was allowed.¹¹⁷

All the parties protested against the decision except the HDZ. The other two ethnic parties maybe only protested tactically, since they could pursue the same strategy. They all used the opportunity to protest because some voters were missing from voters' lists. The HDZ leader, Stjepan Kljuic, claimed that 10 per cent of the Croats had been dropped from the lists. Radovan Karadzic, of the SDS, stated that in some places up to 40 per cent of the Serbs were not on the lists. The leader of the SDA, Alija Izetbegovic, did not specify a percentage but also claimed that many Moslems were not on the lists.¹¹⁸

These statements were actually the final ammunition in the campaign. It only provided more reasons for doubtful voters to favour the nationalists, as 'they were already without a number of votes because of the lists'. It is interesting that the head of the Constitutional Court remained in office after the elections and later joined the SDA. There were claims that this was his reward for the last-minute change.¹¹⁹ This could also be proof of the independence of the judiciary system at the end of communism in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Whatever the case, it was another sign that the communists did not control the state, especially in the old

communist manner, even before the elections, and certainly not after 18 November 1990.

NOTES

1. *Oslobodjenje*, 25 May 1990, p. 4.
2. *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 3 June 1990, p. 2.
3. *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 20 May 1990, p. 3.
4. Ibid.
5. *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 3 June 1990, p. 3.
6. *Oslobodjenje*, 6 June 1990, p. 1.
7. *Oslobodjenje*, 13 June 1990, p. 1.
8. *Oslobodjenje*, 31 July 1990, p. 1, and 1 September 1990, pp. 1–4.
9. Population census of 1991.
10. *Oslobodjenje*, 26 May 1990, p. 1.
11. Malcolm, N., *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 217.
12. *Oslobodjenje*, 13 June 1990, p. 3.
13. *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 1 July 1990, p. 1.
14. *Oslobodjenje*, 13 July 1990, p. 2.
15. Radovan Karadzic at the Kozara meeting of SDS on 22 September 1990; film research interviews and material for the documentary series 'Death of Yugoslavia', Brian Lapping Associates for the BBC (1995–96) (private collection, Tihomir Loza).
16. *Oslobodjenje*, 30 July 1990, p. 1.
17. According to the public statements of political leaders and parties' programmes.
18. Sancanin, M., research interview, April 1997.
19. *Oslobodjenje*, 17 September 1990, pp. 1–4.
20. Research of the Centre for Political Research Belgrade, in *Borba*, 23 December 1989.
21. *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 3 June 1990, p. 1.
22. Ibid.
23. Redzic, E., *Bosna i Hercegovina u Drugom svjetskom ratu* (Sarajevo: Oko, 1998), p. 19.
24. *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 3 June 1990, p. 1.
25. Ibid., p. 2.
26. *Danas*, 4 September 1990, pp. 22–3.
27. Sancanin, M., research interview, April 1997.
28. Reported so in all local press. *Danas*, 25 September 1990, pp. 22–3.
29. Zulfikarpasic, Adil, in an interview for Omladinski Radio Sarajevo, 18 September 1990 (private collection n/a).
30. *Danas*, 25 September 1990, pp. 22–3.
31. SDA session in Tesanj, 22 and 23 September 1990; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
32. *Oslobodjenje*, 7 October 1990, pp. 1–5.
33. Ibid.
34. *Oslobodjenje*, 29 June 1990, p. 5.
35. *Nin*, 29 June 1990, p. 23.

36. Sancanin, M., research interview, April 1997.
37. Ibid.
38. *Oslobodjenje*, 22 July 1990, p. 2.
39. Population census of 1991.
40. *Borba*, 1 September 1990, p. 12.
41. Davor Perinovic explained it in detail in his memoirs published in *Nin*, 29 October 1993, p. 59.
42. Sancanin, M., research interview, April 1997.
43. *Oslobodjenje*, 31 May 1990, p. 4.
44. Davor Perinovic, in *Nin*, 29 October 1993, p. 59.
45. *Danas*, 25 September 1990, p. 32.
46. *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 3 June 1990, p. 2.
47. *Oslobodjenje*, 6 June 1990, p. 1.
48. *Vjesnik*, 10 November 1990, p. 3.
49. Ibid.
50. Pecanin, S. and Sancanin, M., research interviews, April 1996, April 1997 and August 1999.
51. Zeljko Vukovic, in *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 15 July 1990, p. 1.
52. Federal Parliament session of 17–20 October 1990 reported in *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 30 December 1990, p. 5.
53. *Borba*, 9 August 1990, p. 3.
54. TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes, 24 August 1990 (private collection n/a).
55. *Borba*, 24 August 1990, p. 1.
56. *Borba*, 8 September 1990, p. 6.
57. *Borba*, 13 September 1990, p. 1.
58. *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 30 December 1990, p. 5.
59. Serbian government measures announced on 26 October 1990; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
60. Dalibor Brozovic, in *Vjesnik*, 'Panorama subotom' supplement, 3 November 1990, p. 5.
61. *Danas*, 6 November 1990 quoted from 'Glasnik HDZ'.
62. Ibid.
63. Borislav Mihailovic Mihiz, in *Danas*, 30 October 1990, p. 32.
64. Sancanin, M., research interview, April 1997.
65. *Danas*, 8 May 1990, p. 32.
66. Franc Horvat, federal minister, quoted in *Oslobodjenje*, 4 June 1990, p. 1.
67. *Oslobodjenje*, 29 June 1990, p. 6.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. *Oslobodjenje*, 29 June 1990, p. 3.
72. There were many reported cases. The most notorious were the houses of artists Mija Aleksic and Nikola Graovac, burnt down on 31 May 1990, in *Oslobodjenje*, 6 June 1990, p. 2.
73. *Borba*, 27 August 1990, p. 4.
74. *Borba*, 22 August 1990, p. 12.
75. *Danas*, 4 September 1990, pp. 22–3.
76. *Borba*, 24 August 1990, p. 12.

77. Milenko Brkic with the HDZ, Muhamed Besic with the SDA at a higher level and many at a local level. Brkic was a minister in the new nationalist government, Besic was a candidate who remained in his post until the last minute.
78. The meeting was in Velika Kladusa on 19 July 1990, reported in *Oslobodjenje*, 21 July 1990, p. 1.
79. *Oslobodjenje*, 3 July 1990, p. 2.
80. *Borba*, 21 August 1990, p. 12.
81. *Vjesnik*, 29 October 1990, p. 14.
82. Omladinski Radio Sarajevo on 29 and 30 October 1990, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
83. Population census 1991:0.2% Croats, 0.2% Moslems, 2.3% Yugoslavs, 97.3% Serbs.
84. *Oslobodjenje*, 19 June 1990, p. 5.
85. *Nin*, 1 October 1993, p. 57.
86. *Oslobodjenje*, 3 July 1990, p. 2.
87. After the Yugoslavia-Spain football game on 26 June 1990; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
88. After the Yugoslavia-Argentina football game on 30 June 1990; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
89. *Oslobodjenje*, 29 June 1990, p. 3.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
91. *Borba*, 6 August 1990, p. 14.
92. *Oslobodjenje*, '7 dana' supplement, 30 December 1990, p. 5.
93. Ethnic census 1991, published with the map of Geodetski zavod BiH, Sarajevo, 1992.
94. Population census, 1991.
95. *Borba*, 7 August 1990, p. 3.
96. Velibor Ostojic of SDS and Anto Bakovic of HDZ; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
97. Radovan Karadzic, in *Vjesnik*, 4 November 1990, p. 3.
98. It happened in Banja Luka on 13 October 1990, reported in *Vjesnik*, 3 November 1990, p. 3.
99. Bozidar Vucurevic on many occasions during the campaign. He was quoted in all the media including Omladinski Radio Sarajevo, broadcast tapes; M. Sancanin, research interview, April 1996.
100. *Vjesnik*, 25 October 1990, p. 3.
101. *Vjesnik*, 4 November 1990, p. 3.
102. Muhamed Cengic in *Konjic*, 4 November 1990; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
103. Kurspahic, K., *As Long As Sarajevo Exists* (Connecticut: The Pamphleteers Press, 1997), p. 59.
104. *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
106. Sancanin, M., research interview, April 1996. Zlatko Lagumdžija, then the deputy communist leader, explained this deal to me personally in October 1990.
107. Sancanin, M., research interview, April 1990. It took place on 27 October 1990 in 'La Mirage' complex in Mostar. I attended the meeting and witnessed all the events.

108. *Borba*, 12 September 1990, p. 10.
109. *Vjesnik*, 23 October 1990, p. 3.
110. *Vecernje novine*, 8 November 1990.
111. Arnautovic, S., *Izbori u Bosni i Hercegovini '90: analiza izbornog procesa* (Sarajevo: Promocult, 1996, pp. 56–61.
112. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
113. Adil Zulfikarpasic in Mostar, July 1990; quoted in Arnautovic, *Izbori u Bosni i Hercegovini '90*, p. 69.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
116. Seven centres of electoral units: Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Mostar, Zenica, Doboj, Bihac plus two other towns Gorazde and Trebinje.
117. The Constitutional Court of Bosnia-Herzegovina, decision of 16 November 1990; TV Sarajevo, broadcast tapes (private collection n/a).
118. *Vjesnik*, 19 November 1990, p. 3.
119. Nijaz Durakovic, in *Dani*. Also see www.bhdani.com/arhiva/1999/112/inter12.htm.

Nationalist Rule

The disintegration of Yugoslavia was the inevitable result of nationalist victories in the republican elections. Bosnia-Herzegovina was no exception. After describing the results of the elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina, this chapter traces the failure of the nationalists to work together, their incompetence and short sightedness, and the inevitable descent into war.

THE ELECTORAL RESULTS

The three nationalist parties achieved a landslide victory in the elections for Parliament, the Presidency and for local councils. In the highest legislative body, the nationalists won 202 out of 240 seats in both chambers. They won 75.3 per cent of seats in the Chamber of Citizens, while their results in the Chamber of Districts were even better—84.2 per cent of seats. As the electoral systems for these chambers were different, it proved that whatever the system, the nationalists were able to win the overwhelming majority of seats. The reformed communists came a distant fourth, together with their minor satellite parties, with 20 deputies in Parliament. The reformists had 13 deputies, while the MBO and the Liberals had two deputies each. The SPO—the Serb Renewal Movement—had one deputy, but he acted as a member of the SDS, which was the second strongest party with 72 deputies. The only party that was stronger was the SDA, with 86 deputies, while the HDZ came third with 44 reserved seats for their deputies.¹

If one ignores the formal coalitions that had been agreed in some places between strong parties, such as the communists, and weaker partners, such as the former Socialist Alliance (which was in fact just a different name for the communists candidates' list), [Table 4](#) shows the percentages of seats in the republic's parliament.² The seat for the SPO deputy in the district of Nevesinje is included in the SDS's percentage because of the uniformity between the political behaviour of this elected deputy and the SDS, as was the case with the communists and the DSS. The percentage of the votes was similar to the number of seats because of the proportional electoral system and therefore it is irrelevant to analyse numbers specifically.

TABLE 4

SEATS IN PARLIAMENT PER PARTY (%), 1990

<i>Party</i>	<i>Chamber of Citizens (%)</i>	<i>Chamber of Districts (%)</i>	<i>Total Percentage of Seats (%)</i>
SDA	33.00	39.09	35.85
SDS (+SPO)	26.15	35.46	30.41
HDZ	16.15	20.93	18.35
SKBiH-SDP (+DSS)	11.50	3.62	8.32
SRSJ	9.20	0.90	5.41
SSO-DS	1.50	—	0.83
MBO	1.50	—	0.83

Source: S.Arnautovic (1996).

The local election results had a similar pattern. They corresponded to a great extent to the ethnic census results. There were only two municipalities with non-nationalist authorities. Tuzla presented the reformists with a surprise win, while Vares, a small town in central Bosnia, even more surprisingly gave victory to the reformed communists. The communists were the strongest party in one more district—Novo Sarajevo, a part of Sarajevo City—but the nationalists prevented them from forming a minority local government, as they joined forces and thus represented the strongest block, with 51 seats, leaving 49 to the rest, led by the communists.³ Thus, only two districts were governed by non-nationalists, as the reformists and communists formed local coalitions together with some minor parties. The nationalists came to power in the remaining 107 districts and the city of Sarajevo, comprising of ten districts.⁴

The landslide victory of nationalists was obvious at all levels. It was, however, even more distinct in some districts, where all elected local councillors belonged to a single party. There were four such districts under the HDZ—Grude, Listica (which later changed its name to Siroki Brijeg), Citluk and Posusje—although the last one had one member from the other local Croat nationalist party.⁵ The SDS achieved similar results in Bosansko Grahovo.⁶ Many other districts were effectively under one party rule, with only the symbolic presence of opposition councillors. These districts all had an ethnically homogeneous population.

Some districts, however, experienced problems when the nationalist party of the largest ethnic group in the community was overtaken by the nationalist party of a slightly less numerous local ethnic group. There were nine such cases, including Novo Sarajevo, where the SDS took three more seats than the SDA, although there were 1 per cent more Moslems in the municipality.⁷ One should note that 20.4 per cent of the citizens in Novo Sarajevo did not declare themselves as members of any of the three ethnic groups, and this certainly helped the communists to become the strongest local party.⁸ This fact, however,

also united the nationalists in preventing another party from taking power. They forgot their disputes when confronted with a strong non-nationalist opposition.

However, in the other eight cases the nationalists actually took over from each other. Thus, the HDZ became the strongest party in Mostar, Bugojno, Stolac and Zepce, despite the fact that the Moslem population represented a relative majority in these communities. Three more districts with a relative Moslem majority elected more SDS than SDA councillors. This was the case in Doboj, Sanski Most and Vlasenica. In Modrica, the HDZ became the strongest party while the relative majority of the population were Serbs.

In all communities with an absolute or relative Croat majority, the HDZ was the strongest nationalist party. These 'electoral incidents' show the Croat population to be the most homogenized, since they even won in five districts where they did not constitute a majority. The SDS won in three such districts, but also lost in one. The SDA, however, lost in seven cases and also in Novo Sarajevo. As the elections were secret, one could not firmly determine popular support for individual nationalist parties within the respective ethnic groups. These cases, however, show that despite massive support in all three groups, the Croat nationalists seem to be more successful than the others, although even they lost in Vares to the communists. According to the same criteria, the SDA did not win in Tuzla, despite the fact that it had the largest percentage of Moslems in its local population.

Altogether, it seems that there was no significant difference in the popular support for nationalist parties. Support was probably slightly stronger for the Croat and the Serb nationalists than for the Moslems, but they all took around three-quarters of the votes in their respective ethnic groups. One should also take into account that there was another Moslem ethnic party—the MBO—which attracted a small percentage of the vote; and also the higher birth-rate among Moslems, which meant a lower percentage of eligible voters. Thus, one should assume similar popular support for all the nationalist parties among their prospective voters.

Despite some minor irregularities, the results of the elections were accepted by all the parties. The winners obviously lacked any reason to complain, while the losers, that is, communists and reformists, tried to explain their own defeats. This was easier for the reformists, who were the new party and who, after the elections, entered a phase of silence in order to organize themselves under the changed circumstances. The communists, meanwhile, accepted the results but blamed some state institutions by accusing them of cooperation with the nationalists. Emina Keco, a member of the communist leadership, said:

There is no doubt we are betrayed by the state's institutions. Ministers that came into power, albeit with the help of the former party, flirt with nationalist parties, make them favors and look for a new space within the new parties.⁹

Another communist leader, Ivo Komsic, went further, claiming that during the last year 'the SKBiH had five deputies in Parliament and they will have now around twenty'.¹⁰ However, the communists also expressed a selfcongratulatory mood, claiming the credit for a successful transition into a multiparty system and democratic elections. The leader, Nijaz Durakovic, answered a question about losing the elections: 'Firstly, I think we are the moral winners of the elections... Secondly, we were not really in power over the last three years.'¹¹ The communists really achieved a democratic system and organized the elections that brought the democratic will of the people into power in the form of nationalism. Their accusations against the state's institutions only served to prove further the existence of a power vacuum during the late 1980s.

All the nationalist candidates were elected into the collective Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina. They were all members of the nationalist parties and all the parties had two members each, with the exception of the SDA, whose third candidate, Ejup Ganic, came first on the list of the others (minority candidates) as a declared Yugoslav. It was not a sign of Ganic's cosmopolitanism but only a tactical step to get another SDA member into the Presidency. Members of the Presidency consequently elected their *primus inter pares*, the President of the Presidency, by a unanimous decision. Thus, Izetbegovic became the first leading member of the Presidency with a constitutionally restricted mandate of one year and only one possible chance to stand for re-election. Fikret Abdic, who won more votes than any other member of the Presidency, had an equal position to the other members as, according to the constitution, there was no Vice-President. Izetbegovic's election came as no surprise, as the three nationalist parties had agreed on a partnership in governing the republic. Basically the partnership shared the state institutions between them. The SDA (Moslem) took the leading role in the Presidency. The HDZ (Croat) were given the Government. The SDS (Serb) had the leading role in Parliament and elected Momcilo Krajisnik as Parliamentary Speaker. Krajisnik was Karadzic's business partner and codefendant in court action regarding business deals. The Prime Minister was delegated by the HDZ, and Jure Pelivan, the former National Bank Governor who had been sacked and imprisoned during the Agrokomerc scandal, was given the mandate. All three major officials had spent some time in prison during the communist rule, although for very different reasons.

The nationalists' 'partnership in power', as they described it, was achieved relatively easily in the beginning, when the posts were awarded to the most important party members. However, problems soon appeared when the governing bodies were supposed to start work. Effectively this was due to the division of power along ethnic lines. Thus, when the ministries were divided, the parties assumed full control over certain portfolios, which were delegated to their minister regardless of the opinion or policy of their partners in government. As the deputy ministers were from one of the other two nationalist parties, the system could not work. The government officials were responsible to their parties and not to the Prime Minister, the Parliament or any state institutions. The

result was the fragmentation of power. This, on top of the power vacuum of the late communist era, eventually resulted in lawlessness and chaos. Finally, the electoral results meant there was no alternative, non-nationalist or otherwise, to the three nationalist parties. The opposition was too weak because of the nationalists' landslide victory and, therefore, the only way future developments could take direction was determined by the nationalists' partnership, or rather the lack of it.

Some authors misinterpret the electoral results and consequently the whole situation. Thus, Noel Malcolm claims that 'Izetbegovic formed what was in effect a government of national unity', despite the fact that Izetbegovic did not form the government and it was not a government of national unity.¹² His position did not give him power to form the government or to give the mandate to anybody as the Presidency was a collective organ constitutionally made up of seven equal members.

The division of power between the victorious nationalists clearly shows the SDA in charge of the Presidency and a few agreed ministries, while the SDS was in charge of Parliament and a few ministries, and the HDZ was formally in charge of the Government and the ministries they were most concerned about. Malcolm further claims that Izetbegovic 'could have governed the country simply through a Muslim-Croat alliance', thus excluding the Serbs.¹³ This interpretation shows only Malcolm's lack of understanding of the system and the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the time.

The coalition of only two out of three of the nationalist parties would have been disastrous for both the parties and the country, and would have led to war more quickly. The SDS was the second largest party and clearly in control of large chunks of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Furthermore, the electoral success of the nationalists would have been questionable if they had not shown their willingness to cooperate in power immediately before the election. Finally, with all the later events in mind, was there a real difference in the character of the nationalist parties?

WORKINGS OF GOVERNMENT

The nationalists inherited the power vacuum created in the last stages of communist rule. Many officials of the previous governing bodies either switched allegiance to the new governing parties, or used the gap in power for their personal benefit. The loopholes were used for payment of two annual salaries to 216 former *apparatchiks*, including two ministers in the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina. They were declared 'redundant personnel in order to improve production cost'.¹⁴ All of them were paid from the budget and this caused more anger among increasingly dissatisfied employees in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It took two months and twenty-two days for the victorious parties in the elections of November 1990 to agree on the future republican government. During the interim period, the old ones did not really work and the new, often

incompetent ministers had very little chance of preventing the chaotic state of affairs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Eight out of Bosnia-Herzegovina's 12 banks worked with negative equity, but the government did nothing.¹⁵ This meant that most of the economy faced imminent collapse. The ruling parties, however, cared only about how to appoint new managers for the state companies from the nationalist ranks, while the question of whether the company was successful did not bother them.

The communists were the greatest losers and there were some tragic cases. A man who had served for years in the local town council in Trebinje, killed himself after seeing the consequences of the elections.¹⁶ He left a note explaining his great disappointment with the 'new' rulers. 'I could not behave like those who changed sides and had got everything in the previous system', he stated in his last public act.¹⁷ This case was only one incident, while the pattern of behaviour amongst most former communist officials took an opposite route. A large number of officials in the new government, in the republic and at a local level were, like Ganic, former cadres of the communists. He attended, as such, the last congress of the federal communists, later on briefly flirted with the reformists and finally ended up in the SDA. Altogether, he changed political parties three times in less than one year, albeit he was never a member of the reformists and had claimed he did not belong to SDA either. However, he became SDA's vice-president in the years to come.

The nationalist parties made a post-electoral pact and finally solved the problems of dividing power at a republican level. But problems soon arose at lower levels of power in various districts. Local nationalists simply were not willing to share power with their weaker nationalist partners in certain communities because they simply did not need to. They had won an absolute majority. In Trebinje, which is only one of many examples on all sides, the SDS hesitated for a long period to include the partners from the SDA and the HDZ in the local governing structure. The Serbs, and indeed the SDS, presented an absolute majority in the community and therefore did not really need partners. Thus, the setting up of local authorities was delayed for several months in many districts. In Srebrenik and some other communities local governments had still not been formed by the beginning of spring 1991. In Jablanica, a community with a Moslem majority, the only thing they agreed on, almost three months after the elections, was that they would reach an agreement in future.¹⁸

Such an agreement was a step forward in comparison to the local council's decisions in Gorazde, where the officials were elected only by SDA members who had an absolute majority. The SDS councillors boycotted the meeting in protest against the SDA's ignorant attitude towards their slice of power. Even the opposition councillors left the meeting prior to the election of the new local authorities.¹⁹ It is interesting that the new mayor asked for a delay, but his party colleagues ignored his call.²⁰ This proved to be the pattern for almost all the local councils ruled by nationalists. The only possible outcome was either new elections or total anarchy. The nationalists were not ready, as one could easily

conclude, to give up power. They could not understand that the desire for power was not enough. Their incompetence at governing was easily shown by the way in which minor problems grew into big problems with the help of the ruling parties' members.

In Banja Luka, they had a problem agreeing on the text of the oath that all the councillors were obliged to take. The SDS were the majority party, but were confronted not only by the opposition parties of the centre and left but also by their nationalist partners, the SDA and the HDZ. As a newspaper report commented:

The greatest trouble and problem for the councillors were two words: 'socialist', describing Bosnia-Herzegovina, and 'sovereign', describing again the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The councillors of the SDA and the HDZ argued to drop 'socialist' from the text explaining it also did not exist in the rest of the western republics. Meanwhile, they also argued in favour of the word 'sovereign' remaining in the text. On the other side, the SDS councillors supported 'socialist' Bosnia-Herzegovina to remain in the text but wanted 'sovereign' state to be dropped, alleging that Yugoslavia was sovereign and Bosnia-Herzegovina a part of it...²¹

In almost all communities the newly elected councillors, although they belonged to the victorious nationalist partnership, could not easily agree even on the basic functions of local government. Some posts, usually those of the council leaders, were agreed in advance and were not problematic, but the minority party in the government protested and very often boycotted work because the majority, at a local level, ignored most of their demands and suggestions. There were no exceptions: all the nationalist parties behaved in the same manner at a local level. The only difference was in the communities in western Herzegovina where the HDZ won between 90 and 99 per cent of the vote and did not really have to share power with anyone.

The incompetence of the elected nationalists was universal, covering all parties and all regions. In Visoko there was a very similar situation to the one described in Trebinje, but with opposite roles. The SDA ignored the demands and suggestions of their local junior partner, the SDS.²² Wherever any of the nationalist parties had a clear majority they absolutely ignored not only the opposition, but also their partners in power. It showed their real character and, if not hatred towards the other ethnic groups, then at least a lack of tolerance in the ruling circles. This was not the picture that had been given to voters just prior to the elections, when the nationalists portrayed their future cooperation by organizing common publications and meetings. A look at the headlines from a single day, recorded in the main Bosnian daily newspaper *Oslobodjenje*, shows the situation in the republic: 'Disagreements about electing new government in Foca'; 'Help from the republican centre is awaited'; 'Multiparty system in Pucarevo: still without government'; 'Assembly of Gorazde Council: Without

representatives of SDS'; 'Changes in Bosansko Grahovo: Return of incompetent'; and 'Talks in Posusje: One breaths in Croatian way now'.²³

Lack of understanding of the meaning of democracy was a major problem. Electoral success was translated into a 'green light' for the elected to do, or attempt to do, whatever they wanted. Thus, one report states that the 'SDA and HDZ in the village of Bepelj, near Jajce, closed the primary school because three teachers in the school were members of the League of Communists'.²⁴ Up until the elections, chaos threatened Bosnia-Herzegovina from the outside, namely Serbia and Croatia. After the elections, the nationalists created chaos from within. Multiparty democracy led directly and very quickly to administrative paralysis.

Upon entering office, the nationalists put a huge amount of energy into dealing with trivial issues and formalities, which prevented them from working on solving real problems. Thus, the new nationalist occupants of the republican offices took the first steps in accommodating the environment to their needs. The SDS ministers removed from office walls paintings that were not signed by Serb artists.²⁵ The SDA deputies in the Parliament left the session in order to pray.²⁶ It showed that their major concern was religion and not politics, or else they did it only to annoy the other deputies, who were left waiting on the benches.

Even at the formal level of taking the oath, the partners in government opposed each other. The new text of the oath was left without the ideological descriptions of the state from the previous regime, a decision that was easily agreed by the nationalist partners. They never showed any difficulty in abandoning something from the previous regime, but when they needed to establish something new, agreement was out of reach. The first confrontations were over the usual subjects: Bosnia-Herzegovina and sovereignty. The SDS deputies were very cautious about these issues, while the HDZ and the SDA showed the same concern over descriptions of Yugoslavia. These examples, even though one might regard them as petty, would be brought up on almost every single occasion, whatever issue was being discussed in Parliament.

At the opening session of Parliament, the SDS deputy claimed he 'could take an oath only on the Bible and swear allegiance to the Serb people'.²⁷ When the agreement on the text was finally within the reach of Parliament, another issue was raised. The SDS deputies wanted it written in Cyrillic, a demand which was followed by the HDZ stipulation that it should be translated into Croatian, even though the only difference in the whole text was in a single letter in the word meaning democracy: *demokratija* and *demokracija*.²⁸

A typical example of how exclusive the behaviour of the nationalist parties was came very soon after the elections. The newly elected deputies in the Bosnian parliament had to elect from their own ranks a delegation to the chamber in the Federal Parliament, taking into account proportional ethnic representation. They quickly agreed not to elect a Yugoslav, despite the fact that one of the 'others' had to be in the delegation. They did not even try to camouflage their real reason. They would accept a reformist delegate, but only if

he declared himself as a member of one of the three ethnic groups, that is, Moslem, since it was Osman Pirija.²⁹ Every party cared only for their own ethnic group. The state system, which had been heavily damaged by the long-ruling communists, was definitely destroyed by the incoming nationalists.

The impossibility of the 'partnership of nationalists' was proven at the government's very first working session. Prime Minister Jure Pelivan, a Croat, wanted to retain some taxes, which should have been paid into the federal budget as envisaged by the law. The Finance Minister, Momcilo Pejic, a Serb, opposed this intention and the government was promptly divided.³⁰ Although the Prime Minister intended to act unlawfully as, in reality, the federal state no longer functioned, the troubles in the Bosnian economy gave his position a certain logic. However, his strategy was also in line with the Zagreb policy to undermine the federal state as much as possible. The Finance Minister, meanwhile, followed the Serbian doctrine of transferring as much control as possible to Belgrade.

The political ethnic elites had different aims and this, as well as incompetence, is what prevented their cooperation in power. The leaderships of the Serbs and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina simply followed their mainstream leaders in Belgrade and Zagreb, while Moslems tried to underline the issue of Bosnian sovereignty, just as the communists had attempted earlier. The communists, in their attempts, might have been acceptable to all ethnic groups, but Moslem nationalists mistakenly hoped to attract all Moslems and non-nationalist Serbs and Croats. The SDA was mainly concerned with ethnic questions and there was no one in the Bosnian leadership to lead the struggle to protect republican interests. The politics of Izetbegovic and the SDA were not consistent and Izetbegovic showed a predominant concern for Moslem questions only. In this way he repeated some of the mistakes committed by Moslem political leaders during the pre-Second World War period. It seems that the politics of the 1920s and 1930s shared a lot of similarities with the situation during the 1990s. Enver Redzic meticulously analysed the earlier period:

Like Serbian and Croatian national movements, the struggle of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Moslems for autonomy did not express either a unified or countrywide interest of all the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It represented a separate national-political programme which Bosnian-Herzegovinian Moslems followed in contrast to separatist, centrifugal tendencies of national movements of Serbs and Croats.³¹

The only major difference between the SDA and its predecessors in the JMO was that the latter struggled for autonomy, while the former wanted sovereignty. Thus, there was nobody and no one party to rule the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and this was the centrepiece of the Tudjman-Milosevic negotiations. The future of Bosnia-Herzegovina seemed inevitably connected with the bleak future of Yugoslavia.

THE END OF YUGOSLAVIA

Yugoslavia was dissolving even faster now there were democratically elected governments in the republics. The newly elected governments in all the republics showed even less respect for the Federal Government and federal laws. The leading law offenders were Serbia (with Milosevic re-elected with an overwhelming majority), Slovenia and Croatia, who all tended to behave like independent states in hostile relations to each other.³² The federal elections never took place because of disagreements between the republics. Unlawful behaviour by the strongest republics destroyed even the possibility of a common state.

When, in December 1990, Serbia unlawfully used federal money to pay pensions and its other short-term necessities, there were no consequences. The Serbian parliament even sanctioned the 'robbery'. Thus, their actions were lawful according to Serbian legislators but the very same act was a crime according to the Federal Constitution and the understanding of the rest of the Federation. The fact was that 18.3 billion dinars were spent in Serbia illegally and without the permission of the Yugoslav National Bank.³³ Tim Judah described the consequences:

All of a sudden, however, the balance sheets of Serbian banks swelled to the tune of some DM2.6 billion... This was then promptly distributed as credits to large companies, which used [it] to buy hard currency... Other republics had done this before, but the sheer scale of the Serbian swindle has often been cited as one of the key events which made the death of Yugoslavia inevitable.³⁴

This example clearly shows that there was no longer any rule in Yugoslavia and, therefore, there was no state. Croatia and Slovenia quickly followed with other kinds of actions, with similar results—taking money unlawfully from federal sources or refusing to pay into the federal budget. Under these circumstances and during a period of high nationalist tensions, republican oligarchies gained more support because they achieved something for their own republics, although unlawfully, and diminished support for the Federal Government. Izetbegovic claimed that Serbia's 'robbery' meant 'the chances to constitute Yugoslavia as a federation were being significantly reduced'.³⁵

Acts by republican leaders destroyed many achievements of the Federal Government. After Markovic's party lost the elections in all the republics it had contested, his government had devalued the dinar, although economic conditions had required such a step at least a couple of months earlier. The economic situation forced Markovic to change the fixed rate of 7 dinars for 1DM to 9 dinars for 1DM.³⁶ He even prevented the banks from selling foreign currency a week prior to the change. Therefore, his most popular economic steps survived for only one year. It is certain that he could not confront the aggressive and ever more authoritarian ethnic republic leaders without the support of institutions or

really massive popular support. This kind of popular support existed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but when it came to the elections, the vote went in favour of the nationalists. The reasons for this hypocritical behaviour were explained earlier.

The devaluation of the dinar is better understood if one takes into account the inflation rate. At the end of 1990, it was estimated at between 120 per cent and 140 per cent, despite government projections a year earlier of 13 per cent, later 20 per cent and finally 40 per cent.³⁷ Despite these rather disappointing final results in the year of reforms, it was the lowest inflation rate since 1986—when it had been 92 per cent, although with a lot of shortages. In 1987, it was 167.4 .4 per cent, and the following year it went up to 251.2 per cent, while in 1989 the inflation rate was 2,665 per cent.³⁸ The rise in prices affected people's lives to a great extent, since it came after a blitz of improvement, and hopes definitely started to fade.

The Federal Government was under increasing pressure to resign and its influence was disappearing as republican disobedience grew. The first call from Bosnia-Herzegovina for Markovic's resignation came from Karadzic and the SDS.³⁹ The partners in power in Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, could not agree even on this subject. The SDA approved the Federal Government's work but complained during the electoral campaign that there were no Moslem ministers. Later on, Markovic included one Moslem in his cabinet. One could describe Markovic's politics as similar to Titoism with regard to inter-ethnic policy, but without dictatorship. Further differences could be found in political pluralism and the market economy. In order to achieve this, industry was supposed to be privatized, but Markovic never managed to reach this step because of obstruction from Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia.

Another possibility for Yugoslavia, at the beginning of 1991, was a solution favoured certainly by Milosevic and the 'generals' party'—the SKPJ, formed in 1991 by the JNA. Their Yugoslavia would be a Titoist state but not a federal one, at least not in practice, since Milosevic would exercise his influence in the other republics in the same manner as in Serbia, both of its provinces and Montenegro. It would certainly not be a democratic state.

The third option was for the Federation to be transformed into a confederation. The republics would gain even more power and their differences would not affect each other to the extent that they did in the 1980s. This solution was favoured absolutely in Slovenia and Croatia, while the Serb block refused even to think about it. The dissolution of Yugoslavia remained the only certainty: as they could not even agree on how to dissolve the country, war was inevitable.

The role of the Federal Presidency, like the rest of the federal institutions, had diminished completely by 1991. The republican, basically ethnic, leaders took over and started a series of meetings in search of a solution. However, the only progress made was between two of them—Tudjman and Milosevic—at their secret meeting in Karadjordjevo in March 1991.⁴⁰ Allegedly, they agreed on a division of the central Yugoslav republic—the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina actually proved it. It never became clear in public how they planned to divide it,

but some military operations later proved that there were agreements at least in Herzegovina and in northern Bosnia. However, they did not agree on the Serb population in Croatia. This caused the first casualties in armed conflicts during the spring of 1991 and the later war in Croatia.⁴¹

The question of borders between the republics became very important in the leaders' statements. This clearly led to further ethnic division based on ethnic territories. The final consequence of such views had to be the carving up of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The war of 1992, and the years that followed, proved this in the most dramatic way. A year prior to the war, ethnic leaders warned of their intentions.

Franjo Tudjman repeated his views on Bosnia-Herzegovina being a part of Croatia's historic interests.⁴² Most of the major political parties headquartered in Sarajevo immediately reacted to such statements. The HDZ leader, Stjepan Kljuic, said that everybody had a right to personal view; none of the SDA leaders made any remark, alleging their busy schedule.⁴³ Out of the public eye, the HDZ leaders from Herzegovina and central Bosnia demanded in Zagreb an inclusion of their symbols, along with other Croatian signs, into the new Croatian coat of arms.⁴⁴ It was obvious from the very beginning of the new regime in Sarajevo, that it was Tudjman, and not Kljuic, who ruled the Croat ethnic corps in Bosnia-Herzegovina, while Milosevic behaved in the same manner with regard to Bosnian Serbs. His remarks about Bosnia-Herzegovina were not often made in public, unlike Tudjman's, but their character was very similar: 'Serbia must clearly state that its present administrative borders are linked only to the federal system in Yugoslavia.'⁴⁵

Tudjman and Milosevic were both concerned with the question of territories after they had done all that they could to dissolve Yugoslavia. The Slovenes voted in favour of independence; in their view all that remained was just the technical issue of how to dismember the former federation.⁴⁶ Since the two strongest leaders wanted more territories than their republics possessed, war seemed the inevitable conclusion of the Yugoslav crisis. With the imminence of war, the remaining question concerned who would provide the armed forces for different ethno-political options. Because the subject of this work is Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the JNA's acts there were only the consequence of its previous roles in Slovenia, and more importantly Croatia, only the major facts about the federal army are analysed. Its ideology and ethnic structure put the JNA decidedly on Milosevic's side, as James Gow found:

Sixty per cent of officers were Serb; a further 5.4 per cent were 'Yugoslavs'...and 6.2 per cent were Montenegrins. These all shared a perspective of Yugoslavia that coincided in many ways with that of the neo-Communist Serbian leadership. The political attitudes of the remaining officers were generally to be expected to have a Communist orientation but they were probably less likely to find Milosevic attractive. The ethnic distribution of the rest...in early 1991 was put at: Croats, 12.6%;

Macedonians, 6.3%; Muslims, 2.4%; Slovenes, 2.8%; Albanians, 0.6%; Hungarians, 0.7%; others, 1.6%.⁴⁷

The ethnic structure of the JNA was a great problem and was even against the Constitution of 1974. Article 242 prescribed a proportional representation in the army, but in reality only sanctioned it at the highest level. It was harder for a colonel of Serb ethnic origin to be promoted than for someone from another ethnic group. However, even this fact did not improve the balance and the majority of generals were still Serbs. The reason for this was that, beside officers from Serbia proper, the overwhelming majority of colonels, in similarity to other ranks, were Serbs, either from Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina or Croatia. There was one general of the same ethnic group over every 20 Serb, 18 Yugoslav, 14 Montenegrin, 10 Croat, 9 Macedonian and Moslem, 6 Slovene and 3 Albanian colonels.⁴⁸

During 1990 the JNA's acts were not yet openly one-sided. But as Tudjman's Croatia stood more openly against such an army, it was not hard for Milosevic to use his influence over many of the generals and officers to make the army behave like his marionette. Thus, the federal army passed through several phases: from a revolutionary partisan army to a communist controlled military force and, finally, to a force serving the interests of a single ethnic party—Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia—in a multi-ethnic federation, with multiparty systems in the federal units.

While Slovenia organized its own army—the Territorial Defence—through the system, Croatia opted for the police to make up a core of their future army. During the autumn of 1990, the HDZ organized the secret arming of the police forces in Croatia. They also conscripted a great number of Tudjman's party members into the official police, actually making it another army. On 22 January 1991, the Croatian police force was 50,741 men strong and represented a forceful army.⁴⁹ It was only lacking in heavy artillery and sophisticated weapons. It was clear that two armies in the same territory at the same time could not function without a war.

The JNA also misjudged public opinion. After the television screening of a film their intelligence services had prepared about the illegal import of arms for Croatia and a former JNA general serving in the HDZ government in Zagreb, preparing and organizing units for resistance and terrorist actions against the JNA, public reaction reflected the political reality at the time.⁵⁰ The result was that most of the non-Serb population actually doubted the facts shown in the film, whilst the Serbs believed them, and were disappointed with the JNA's hesitation in preventing the arming of Croatia's police.

The attitude of ordinary Moslems towards the JNA can be understood through a bizarre incident in Bosanski Petrovac, a small town in western Bosnia. Four Moslems were involved in heavy arguments following the film. One of them worked in Zagreb and clearly supported the Croatian version of the documentary, while the others, all locals, could not accept his claims and saw it

as an attack on the JNA and its role in preserving the country. The fight which followed their argument ended with the Zagreb worker suffering minor injuries.⁵¹ This incident showed that some neutral federal institutions still had popular support in Bosnia-Herzegovina and a chance against the exclusive nationalist policies. However, federal institutions were either taken over by Milosevic like, above all, the JNA or destroyed, as Markovic's government had been.

The JNA, meanwhile, took the Serb side and consequently became their own army. There was also fertile ground for the formation of paramilitary units. According to some studies and issued arms permits, the population was well armed. There were 1,100,000 registered weapon holders in the whole of Yugoslavia. Furthermore, it was calculated that between another 1 million and 6 million holders were not registered. It would appear, therefore, that one quarter of the population in Yugoslavia was in possession of some kind of weapon.⁵²

Thus Yugoslavia ceased to exist during 1991. One could argue, that despite international recognition, the state had not actually existed from the moment the whole territory was not controlled by the official federal institutions. I would argue that the end came with the first victims and armed clashes between the different armed formations, commanded from Belgrade and Zagreb—the JNA alongside Serb paramilitary groups, and the Croatian police alongside Croat paramilitaries. From then on, the state certainly did not exist any more, although one could claim that it had evaporated even earlier. The Federal Prime Minister, Ante Markovic described the situation:

We have a situation in which the erosion of our country is not only huge but is even escalating. The economic and judicial chaos is becoming total. The catastrophe of the country accompanied by a social and economic explosion is, by now, very certain.⁵³

The first open, armed battle between the Serbs and the Croats took place in Pakrac, in Croatia, on 28 February 1991. In practice, the state of Yugoslavia already hardly existed. From then on, even in theory, one could find very few characteristics to describe Yugoslavia as a state. Legal institutions from different parts of the country opposed, and even fought, each other. Both the JNA and the Croatian police were legal, but they were fighting on opposing sides in the same state. Bearing in mind all that has already been said about the situation, Yugoslavia had really ended by then. The war that followed was just a race for territory. The circumstances in society were different during this period and its politics should be discussed separately because of the different conditions. Although the society in Bosnia-Herzegovina remained peaceful for a while, this peace was never to be secured and the whole situation there reflected the ongoing war in Croatia.

CONSEQUENCES

Bosnia-Herzegovina was confronted with two kinds of chaos because of the developments in Croatia and Serbia, and because of the misrule within the republic. Fragmented administration in local councils was replicated at the level of republican government. The result was administrative paralysis in the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina. One should note the timing of this administrative paralysis. In 1991, the war was about to break out in Slovenia and, more importantly, in Croatia. Instead of a strong administration working under difficult conditions, the nationalists created a lack of administration in many places.

Even at republic level there were problems. They elected each other, as their party leaders had already agreed, and placed their men in the highest authorities. The basis of the agreement was in the division of power. There was no, or at most very little, cooperation between them. The ministries were given to one party and the deputy and assistant ministers were from the other two parties, in order to bring about ethnic equality. Instead, this resulted in the total break up of the ministries' work, since the minister was often opposed by his assistants. The nationalist parties did not expect any interference in their portfolios, as they had divided power. Thus, the government was unable to function, since the ministers felt responsible neither to the Prime Minister nor to Parliament, but only to their party leaders. Furthermore, the parties had increasingly confronted each other since the brief pre-electoral alliance and immediate post-electoral feelings of triumph.

The consequence of the situation in Yugoslavia and the increasing chaos in place of controlled governing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was growing popular protest and the collapse of the local economy. In many communities the new authorities faced street protests by those disappointed with their living standards. The pensioners were the first on the streets, demanding their delayed pensions. Although the nationalists had very little to do with such delays at the end of 1990, they certainly had to bear the responsibility for the promises they had made during the campaign. After the initial street protest on 19 December, the first session of the new parliament on 20 December was celebrated with a huge fireworks display and other festivities, which were paid for out of the republic's budget.⁵⁴ A day later the pensioners were again on the streets—and even angrier. Some of the other social and professional groups, such as railroad workers, shoemakers and many others, followed with their own protests or strike actions. The health service came near to a state of collapse, as did many other state services.

'Sipad', one of the four giants of the Bosnian economy, declared their own state of emergency. It was owed twice the amount of money that it, in turn, owed, but, since the financial system in the country did not work properly, its 90,000 employees were not paid regularly.⁵⁵ Another giant—RMK Zenica—was about to stop production because of debts and its inability to deliver goods because the

railway system was not functioning, as its employees had started strike action.⁵⁶ Very soon, in March, the RMK workers started their own strike action. In another case, 50,000 building workers threatened to strike because of their own financial situation.⁵⁷

The short-lived nationalist rule, or lack of it, brought the economy and society to near collapse in only a few months. It was like a vicious circle: Marković's Federal Government tried to break its spell but was prevented by the republics' oligarchies. The unified market of Yugoslavia no longer existed and the new Bosnian governors were more concerned with ethnic questions than with the economy. They even tolerated, if not initiated, the unlawful occupation of newly built flats in towns.⁵⁸ These actions, which started in the interim period, became more widespread during the nationalist reign. This was a strategy to get stronger support, since those unlawfully occupying the flats knew they would be evicted if power changed hands or the rule of law was established. Such people would follow the leaders even to war, simply to preserve their possessions.

The consequence of the nationalist partnership was the ethnic segregation of governing portfolios. Although they did not show any willingness to push for federal elections, all three nationalist parties were interested in appointing the few federal officials they were entitled to. The highest post was in the Federal Presidency. While the communists organized elections for this post, albeit unwillingly, the new democrats did not show respect for this aspect of democracy.

Because of Bogicević's political behaviour as a representative of all citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Karadžić and his followers became louder in their demands to sack Bogicević. He, though a Serb, was supported by the Moslem and Croat political circles, but only later in 1991. In January, despite their respect for Bogicević's work, the SDA left this issue to the SDS. They were really interested to see a Moslem in this position and claimed it was their turn in May; the SDS could appoint whoever they wanted until then.⁵⁹ Bogicević stayed, however, in the Federal Presidency until the very end, since the SDA and the SDS kept opposing each others' initiatives to install their own man in Belgrade. The nationalists needed plenty of time to reach any decision and, therefore, Bogicević was able to remain in office.

This shows that the main concern of the SDA was not Bosnia-Herzegovina but the number of Moslems appointed in the various institutions. The deputy leader of the SDA went so far as to claim that there were not enough Moslems working on the railway.⁶⁰ One could hardly expect one nationalist party to behave differently, but this party *was* different from the SDS and the HDZ, although some authors confuse the clear distinction between the nationalist parties and the main character of the SDA. It was different from the other partners in many senses. It also led the way to the destruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Although one can find many examples of how this party behaved with more tolerance than the other two partners ruling Bosnia-Herzegovina, the nationalistic

character of the Moslem leaders prevented them from adopting a wiser policy, which could have produced a solution for the future. In this sense, one could hardly differentiate between the three nationalist parties. Thus, the only way out of the republic's chaotic situation was war.

Bosnia-Herzegovina was in the worst position in Yugoslavia because of its multi-ethnic character and the clear territorial interest of its neighbours. However, the local leaders and their parties made it even worse. Their nationalist feelings simply blinded them from finding a solution—no longer in terms of a future state, but simply in terms of peace. The only possibilities for Bosnia-Herzegovina to avoid war were either for there to be a change in government or for the ruling nationalists to reach an agreement. The option of new elections was also possible but the nationalists were not interested in it, and it is doubtful whether it would have changed anything at this stage of the political and, already, military developments. The nationalists were completely opposed to each other and were constantly preparing the grounds for future conflict. The only thing they understood was that it would be difficult to achieve a peaceful solution. As Biljana Plavsic of SDS put it:

It is up to the peoples here to find an acceptable formula. They are represented now by their real representatives. We understand that the road is very hard on the way to finding a common formula of living which does not make a minority of the Serb people or does not make the Moslem or Croat peoples feel they are going into a 'Greater Serbia'...⁶¹

This does not mean, however, that they strove to reach this objective. It was much easier, and financially rewarding, for the higher ranked members to take the road to war. Once the nationalists had somehow managed to establish local governments and form one for the republic, they clearly divided Bosnia-Herzegovina according to the influence in different areas of the various parties in the governing partnership. Therefore, the rule of law was unachievable, since the unwritten rule of ethnic belonging was held above all others.

The nationalist partnership could not function in practice because of the incompetence of nationalist cadres. More importantly, it could not govern Bosnia-Herzegovina because of diametrically different political concepts with regards to the future of the republic. The SDS blindly followed Belgrade's policy and opted for a Yugoslav federation or nothing. The HDZ had a similar relationship with Zagreb and, therefore, first argued for confederation and later opted for the conditional independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina. When these political manoeuvres were translated into reality, both parties were separatist and this further degraded the power of Sarajevo. Thus, after imaginary power was amicably divided between the partners, a policy which did not function in practice, the partners opted for the division of territories. The remaining issue was how to make this division, which caused major problems for the 'partners'.

The SDA supported a declaration concerning Bosnian sovereignty, signed by 84 Moslem intellectuals.⁶² The party tried to use the concept of civil society in order to achieve its own aims—underlining BosniaHerzegovina's sovereignty and independence from the other power centres in determining the republic's destiny. In such circumstances, the Moslems would be a clear majority and in a stronger position for negotiations than the Serbs or the Croats. The declaration was supported throughout the Moslem communities and was signed by many claiming to be intellectuals, although it was clear that backward communities, as many of the Bosnian towns were, could not have had that many intellectuals.⁶³

The percentage of illiterate people in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1981 shows that almost half a million people, 14.5 per cent of the whole population, could not read or write.⁶⁴ There were 23.3 per cent of females illiterate and 5.5 per cent of males.⁶⁵ It is only after learning these facts that one can understand why only seven women were elected into parliament. Against this background, one could hardly imagine there were thousands of intellectuals of only one ethnic group in the small towns.

Finally, the SDA went public with its proposal for sovereignty, which was the same as the one declared by the Moslem intellectuals.⁶⁶ In parliament, the SDS deputies refused to discuss the subject, finding an excuse in the SDA's incorrect procedural steps.⁶⁷ One ruling party was ruled from Zagreb, the other was completely controlled by Belgrade, while the third tried to base its policy on compromise and Bosnian statehood. The problem was that an ethnic party could not be the leader of this kind of policy in a multi-ethnic society. Even if the non-Moslems did not agree with their own ethnic parties, they certainly could not follow the call of another nationalist party. The most they could have done was to ignore all three nationalist policies. Such an attitude could be found in the urban centres in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The lack of a political alternative to the nationalist concept was proven from the very beginning of democratic rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, an alternative did exist, but was far too weak to be able to achieve any influence. As the issue of sovereignty became a divisive one, a minor party, made up of the former Youth Organization which had transformed into the Democratic Alliance (and later on into Liberals), and some independent intellectuals including Zdravko Grebo, prepared a proposal for a new Bosnian constitution. It declared Bosnia-Herzegovina as a state of citizens and followed the main patterns of liberal democracies. This attempt, however, only remained as a sign that movements also existed that did not follow ethnic leaders. It was also proof of the weakness of the political alternative. The nationalists simply ignored everything coming from the opposition. Despite all the confrontations between the governing parties, they remained united in refusing all alternative proposals and suggestions.

The most important parliamentary session with regard to Bosnian sovereignty was held on 27 February 1991. At the same time, the first armed clashes started in Croatia, marking the end of the federal state. In historical terms this gave even

more importance to the parliamentary session in Sarajevo. The declaration proposed by the SDA deputies attracted its main objections from the SDS benches once more. Neither side was willing to compromise. This was the definite end of the partnership: the last months of peace would be characterized by the parallel policies exercised by the former partners. Izetbegovic criticized Karadzic for the following statement: 'If Yugoslavia is to be dissolved, we [Bosnian Serbs] authorize Slobodan Milosevic to act on our behalf.'⁶⁸ Karadzic's defence was the continuation of the statement '...if Yugoslavia is to be preserved and built we authorize Alija Izetbegovic'.⁶⁹ His more important discussion was about the imminent future of the state, 'I have to say that Serb people do not see their security outside Yugoslavia, do not see life outside Yugoslavia and will not live outside of Yugoslavia.'⁷⁰ Thus, he made it clear there would be no compromise. At the same session Izetbegovic had previously stated that his minimum demand, and that of his followers, would be for the sovereignty, freedom and unity of the republic. In the more practical part of his speech he specified, 'I would sacrifice peace for a sovereign Bosnia-Herzegovina. I would not sacrifice a sovereign Bosnia-Herzegovina for peace.'⁷¹

A quick response, to make sure that there would never be any agreement between these partners, came from Nikola Koljevic, the SDS member of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who said that Bosnia-Herzegovina could not be a sovereign state as far as the Serb people were concerned.⁷² The opposition was too weak to make a stronger impression or to change the situation. The HDZ leader, Stjepan Kljuic, also participated, but it seems he left the other two parties to fight, while opting for sovereignty.

The real incompetence of the nationalist parties was proven by their behaviour during the session. Only such disorganized parties could suddenly change their major political stand in order to annoy their partners. Thus, the SDA came up with a new position regarding the future of Yugoslavia. They said that from then on their party was no longer in favour of a federal Yugoslavia, but in favour of a confederation.⁷³ This public change of policy gave rise to the immediate reaction of SDS members, who made remarks like, 'Serb mothers are still giving birth to Princip's', referring to the man whose shots at the Austrian Archduke triggered the First World War in 1914. It was even claimed that a 'sovereign of such a country would not dare to pass by the Princip's Bridge in an open chariot', referring to the site of the assassination in 1914.⁷⁴

The strength of the nationalist parties in relation to each other was a major concern. Thus, the road to war was already outlined and the lack of ambition for a political compromise made a violent conclusion more certain. Regardless of the importance of certain issues, they never came up for discussion. Major constitutional changes, including a change in the name, the flag and the coat of arms of the republic, were put aside and remained 'communist ones', because of the lack of good political will even to settle something they all agreed on.

The fragmentation of power, and consequently of Bosnia-Herzegovina, could be seen even through the attempt to change the official flag. The SDA proposed

a new Bosnian flag to be divided into three colours, that is, one for each ethnic group: green for the Moslems, blue for the Croats and red for the Serbs. Karadzic used this opportunity in an interview immediately after the described parliamentary session to state that the Serb colour was blue and not red.⁷⁵ His statement was important and as a result the deal was off. Even the name of the republic remained 'Socialist', because the partners were never able to agree even on the policy they had decided from the very beginning: to destroy everything with a communist implication. Even that was too much for them, because it would require a formal agreement and none of the nationalists was ready for this.

The nationalists attempted to change or destroy many features of the previous rule as a logical consequence of the new political system. But they also attempted to destroy the parts of the system that worked well. To make the situation worse, and unpopular even among their own voters, they did not hide their principles of ethnic division, which were employed everywhere. The inevitable consequence of such a rule was the fragmentation of the state, firstly in general terms of rule and functioning, but very soon in terms of territorial division.

The example of one of the few systems still functioning in Bosnia-Herzegovina—the state-owned media—shows the improbability of such rule. The new parties in power wanted to return to the previous system of controlled information. Strong criticism and descriptions of mediocrity in the highest ranks of the new government was not something the leaders wanted to hear. Therefore, they passed a new law on information.⁷⁶ This would enable them to behave like the chiefs during the hardest communist period and very much like the leaders in the rest of the Serbo-Croat speaking republics. Also, they discussed constantly the possible ethnic division of TV and radio channels.

This recipe for governing, fragmentation, was prescribed everywhere and especially in the media. The journalists, however, rebelled and came to the front of Parliament to protest.⁷⁷ Public support for their action came from the very same people who had voted for the nationalists six months earlier. Finally, the Constitutional Court declared the new law was in contravention of the constitution. Consequently, the nationalists did not manage to take over the media organizations in Sarajevo. This was not surprising, however, if one considers that votes for the nationalists did not really represent support for their policies, but a simple ethnic census. Many of the voters were not real nationalists.

During the period of crisis throughout Yugoslavia, which resulted in the rise of extreme nationalism, the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina simply followed a pattern and gave their vote to their nationalist parties in order to obtain the protection of their basic ethnic interests and rights. According to everyday life, as it was reported in the local press, and the personal experiences of many authors, a large portion of nationalist voters did not really support nationalist policies. They are likely to have been the majority of society. Another type of nationalist voter, whose beliefs were based on the hatred of others, were in a

minority or, at least, did not have access to the public in the same way as the others. The latter possibility is, however, less likely, with the advent of an increasingly professional media in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The media survived and would continue, until the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, to be a major subject for nationalists' negotiations.

Thus, by spring 1991, everything was set for a future military solution to the political problems. The use of violence became a major attraction to the nationalists and, as the JNA's role as a Serb force has already been described, the Bosnian police came under pressure in terms of who would control it. Led by the minister delegated by the SDA, and his deputy, appointed by the SDS, the police surprisingly remained united during 1991 because they did not follow their respective party's policies. But the fragmented power in Bosnia-Herzegovina did not allow for any kind of unified force that would prevent the formation of illegal armed forces. These illegal paramilitaries were organized by the ruling nationalists, thus showing a paradox, since those in power were actually undermining the state. This was acknowledged by the Minister of Internal Affairs:

While the state is dealing with politics unsuccessfully, crime is very successful. The borders between the first and the second are not clear very often. One is using another as a mask that presents even more difficulties to the police force.⁷⁸

The nationalist parties were arming their most loyal members, many of whom had criminal records. There are different claims concerning when it all started but one can easily conclude, however, that the organizing of armed forces by the nationalist parties started in Bosnia-Herzegovina during 1990.⁷⁹ The Serbs had, besides their own paramilitaries, the JNA on their side, while the Croats were helped by Zagreb. This left the Moslems as the weakest, despite their own paramilitary force, controlled by the SDA. The only remaining question was when the war would start. The very date is also a matter of contention, although it is of no importance for this book. All of the conditions for war were in place by the spring of 1991, and remained in place until the end of peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

NOTES

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 117–22.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

7. Ethnic Census of 1991.
8. Ibid.
9. *Oslobodjenje*, 21 November 1990, p. 3.
10. *Oslobodjenje*, 5 December 1990, p. 6.
11. *Oslobodjenje*, 8 December 1990, p. 2.
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13. Ibid.
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65. *Ibid.*
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Conclusion

After Tito's death in 1980, the communists failed to reorganize themselves, which brought them into more political troubles. Meanwhile, in the absence of their late leader, the economy showed all the signs of their incompetence, under the circumstances of a global economic crisis. These failures caused the rise of popular dissent which, however, was not organized or orchestrated by any force in society. The whole situation should be seen as a continuation of the previous period, without the main substance—Tito. Thus, a non-functioning system and prolonged economic crisis set up the preconditions for the appearance of an extreme ideology, as the leading political structures showed no signs or intentions of change.

It is at this point, in 1987, that the beginning of the end of the federal state should be marked, as Milosevic united communist and nationalist doctrines. Serbian nationalism triggered the others and the struggle on political platforms was rapidly shifted into military confrontation over the course of four years. There is little argument among contemporary authors on this point, and this is the period with which this work is mainly concerned.

However, it is common to omit independent developments in Bosnian politics and society, as authors tend to concentrate on the major players—Serbia and Croatia. So far, the major contemporary work on Bosnia-Herzegovina, Noel Malcolm's 'Short History', covered this period in only twenty-five pages, many of which were filled with an analysis of Serbia.¹ Very few authors, such as Dyker, lent much weight to a series of scandals in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the late 1980s.² Financial affairs and cases of the misuse of power caused a flood of resignations and the sacking of top officials, which coincided with Milosevic's rise but were not connected. The republic's economy almost collapsed while a political power vacuum was created as a result of the resignations. Thus, it was in Bosnia-Herzegovina that the old communist *nomenklatura* fell first and was replaced with a more liberal one, although also communist. The problem was that there were very few, or no, systematic changes in society. All attention was paid to personnel changes and the system remained unimproved. This condition was general in eastern Europe.

The ethnic nationality policy was, until then, at least constitutionally, carefully observed and was determined to guarantee equality. However, the rise of

nationalism heavily influenced the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the balance of ethnic equality in the provincial communities. Bosnian communists managed to prevent attempted political ethnic divisions in their ranks, but were very weak because of the situation previously mentioned. Therefore, a gap in society appeared between the communist-influenced urban areas and the neglected rural regions. Larger centres remained cosmopolitan, but rural Bosnia-Herzegovina became ethnically divided for historical reasons and due to prolonged economic and political difficulties that had diminished communist influences. Thus, the nationalism created in the political elites outside Bosnia-Herzegovina was accepted by those who formed the basis of rural society within the republic.

The end of the 1980s was the period of a sharp rise in nationalism in most of the communist world. The causes in Yugoslavia, however, were different from the causes of similar trends in other countries. As communism in Yugoslavia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina within it, was largely authentic and indigenous, the causes of nationalism were also to a great extent specific to the region. The system was not understood as being imposed by some foreign element. Therefore, most of the reasons for the rise of nationalism can be found internally. Thus, the non-functioning political system and the poor state of the economy were crucial factors leading to popular dissent. A brief spell of improved economic conditions in the state was achieved by Markovic's reforms, but came too late to change significantly popular attitudes. Two concepts of changes contested the ruling system. One was liberal and was supported even within the communist ranks, which were increasingly weak. The other was nationalistic and was hesitantly allowed in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

By 1990, the three nationalist doctrines, by competing between themselves, had created a wider basis for their own support. Thus, the main electoral issue was the ethnic question. None of the civil society parties could win the elections over the nationalists by fighting on this issue. This is especially the case in multi-ethnic societies where it is easier to influence the electorate by alleging that other ethnic groups are dangerous. Wherever the ethnic question became the main electoral issue in the period of prolonged economic crisis, the chances of success for extreme parties and movements were higher. Therefore, the reasons for the nationalists' rise to power in Bosnia-Herzegovina are not to be found in ancient history, but in contemporary politics. As Zimmermann found, 'the most democratic alternative to nationalists was the communists', while the elections were a 'referendum on the past'.³ Therefore, the communists were destined to lose. Furthermore, the elections in multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina, under such conditions, actually constituted an ethnic census. But even the vote for nationalists did not mean support for chauvinist policies, as the popular demonstrations against the nationalist government and militarization on the eve of the war in 1992 proved.⁴

In order to win the elections, the ethnic parties had to demonstrate their willingness to cooperate and work together. This is another proof of the lack of a

popular attitude towards ethnic segregation. The introduction of democracy brought about a rise in ethnic issues and, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it was religion that separated ethnic groups: hence the importance of the clergy. As Huntington found in the case of Turkey, '...as elsewhere, democracy reinforced indigenization and the return to religion'.⁵ From a wider perspective, one could find this was a general trend in the postcommunist societies. As the Tofflers argued, it was 'the failure of socialism' that propelled Yugoslavs and Russians 'toward chauvinistic-cum-religious delirium'.⁶ The alternative to nationalism had no influence over religion; the main electoral issue was ethnic and the electorate's choice was obvious.

Once in power, nationalists could not cooperate because of their incompetence and their opposing views on the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Yugoslavia. This effectively caused chaos in a communist-created power vacuum. Instead of communist misgoverning, the nationalists introduced a lack of governing. The major problem during the short nationalist rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina resided in the very nature of nationalism. As Zimmermann argues, 'Even if nationalism arrives by democratic means, it accepts no obligation to conduct itself democratically.'⁷ The decisionmaking process was removed from institutions of power and given to nationalist oligarchic structures which were mutually opposed. The lack of a democratic tradition was underlined by the absence of the democratic means to control the ruling parties.

The consequence was the inevitable division of territory, since power and the system could not be organized by mutually opposing nationalists. However, the division of territory was complicated, as most of the regions were not populated by only one ethnic group. This situation could not have been solved peacefully and war was the only solution: this was not a unique Bosnian recipe, but just a continuation of the method of solving territorial problems in the Yugoslav Federation. All politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina, from the moment of the first battles in Croatia, were simply a preparation for war.

There were still some minor obstacles in the major centres as the more cosmopolitan population, living in ethnically mixed communities resisted the attractions of ethnic politics. But rural Bosnia-Herzegovina, more homogeneous ethnically, was taken over by the nationalists and already lodged in a pre-war state. This was the end of Yugoslavia, and the future situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was already determined. The ruling parties that were supposed to be at the top of society, and their supporters in the rural areas, were in favour of violent means. The urban middle class was stripped of its monopoly over power and most of its influence by its electoral defeat. Therefore, it was just a question of time before violent forces prevailed and the war began.

It was not work by some quiet nationalist circles in Bosnia-Herzegovina that destroyed the whole communist system in the country. The abuse of power, unchecked for decades, on the part of communists, added to a prolonged economic crisis, made the whole system and its representatives unpopular and unacceptable to the population. The population itself was always divided, albeit

not on an ethnic basis, as some authors like to claim, but along rural and urban class lines. Suppressed nationalist feelings could be found in some rural areas but these alone would have been too weak were it not for an urban, middle class whose underlying support enabled the communist regime to abandon communist doctrine and seek a possible alternative.

Liberal alternative views were often expressed by some members of this middle class but were not influential enough, and certainly not attractive enough, for ordinary citizens living under ever worsening economic conditions. These complicated ideas certainly could not compete with simple nationalist slogans transmitted from across the border. Many just followed the nationalist path because their lives had been impoverished and nationalistic promises were easy to understand even if their claims were groundless. The rest stuck to the idea of unity and rejection of nationalism, but in democratic conditions the result was elected nationalism.

Nationalists wisely exploited some myths, legends and historical stereotypes but also real stories from a relatively recent past; that is, the Second World War, when there really was inter-community hatred in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Lack of education among many rural citizens, very traditional family heritage and a fear of the unknown—a life in democratic conditions with rising nationalism in neighbouring republics—made ethnic homogenization stronger and more widespread. The vote necessarily did not give a *carte blanche* for future war but only strengthened the negotiating position of ethnic groups within the new system. However, the elected nationalist elites were incompetent and were only able to trace a sure path towards armed struggle. Once the society in Bosnia-Herzegovina became totally divided on an ethnic basis, with the exception of only a few major urban centres, neighbouring ruling politicians felt invited to join the struggle for more ethnic space.

NOTES

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2. Dyker, D.A., *Yugoslavia: Socialism, Development and Debt* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 146.
3. Zimmermann, W., *Origins of a Catastrophe* (New York: Times Books, 1996), p. 69.
4. Demonstrations of 5 March 1992 in Sarajevo and many major centres; demonstrations of 5 and 6 April 1992 in Sarajevo.
5. Huntington, S.P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Touchstone Books, 1998), p. 148.
6. Toffler, A. and H., *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (London: Warner Books, 1994), p. 287.
7. See Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe*, p. 68.

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